VOLUME 1 (2021)

ENGAGING KOREA:

CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS



Student presentations & papers for CS9081: Introduction to Korea Studies

Professor Lee Kwan Min, WKWSCI, NTU, Singapore

AY 2020-2021, Semester 2



CONTENTS

01
Tourism in South Korea **1 | 136**

02
Multiculturalism and Diversity in South Korea **19 | 156**

03
South Korea Beauty Standards **37 | 174**

04
Globalisation of Hangul **53 | 193**

05
Education in South Korea **71 | 207**

06
Issues Challenging South Korea's Youth **87 | 221**

07
K- pop Fan Culture in South Korea **107 | 242**

08
How Mukbang Started and Where it Stands Today **121 | 257**

A TRIP TO KOREA

ANG XIN LING ADELLE
CATHERINE SEAH QIAN YI
CHARLOTTE ETHEL TAN
LAI XUAN KAI DARREN

ITINERARY

RANKED #1 EST. 2021

CS9081 TRAVEL AGENCY



THE PERFECT KOREA ITINERARY

MEET YOUR TOUR GUIDES



Darren



Adelle



Charlotte



Catherine

Day 0

Time	Activity	Tour Guide
1400	Meet at Airport Lounge	Darren
1500	Briefing	
1600	Depart Changi International Airport	

Day 1

Time	Activity	Tour Guide
0700	Arrival at Incheon Airport	Darren
0800	Nana Clinic	
1000	Seoul National University	
1200	Lunch	Adelle
1300	Namsan Seoul Tower	Charlotte
1400	Ansan Mountain	
1500	Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)	
1600	Statue of Sejong	
1700	Gyeongbokgung Palace	Catherine
1800	Dinner	Adelle
1900	Lotte World	Charlotte
2000	Octagon	
2100	Hotel	

Day 2

Time	Activity	Tour Guide
0700	Rise and Shine	Catherine
0800	Depart from Incheon Airport	
0900	Arrival at Jeju International Airport	
1000	Tangerine Orchard	
1100	Seongsan Ilchubong	
1200	Lunch	Adelle
1300	Osulloc Tea Museum	Catherine
1400	Udo Island	
1500	Flight back to Singapore	



MENU



Lunch - Day 1

Ddukbokki

Soondae

Hoeddeok



Dinner - Day 1

Kimchi

Japchae

Bibambap

Korean Barbecue



Lunch - Day 2

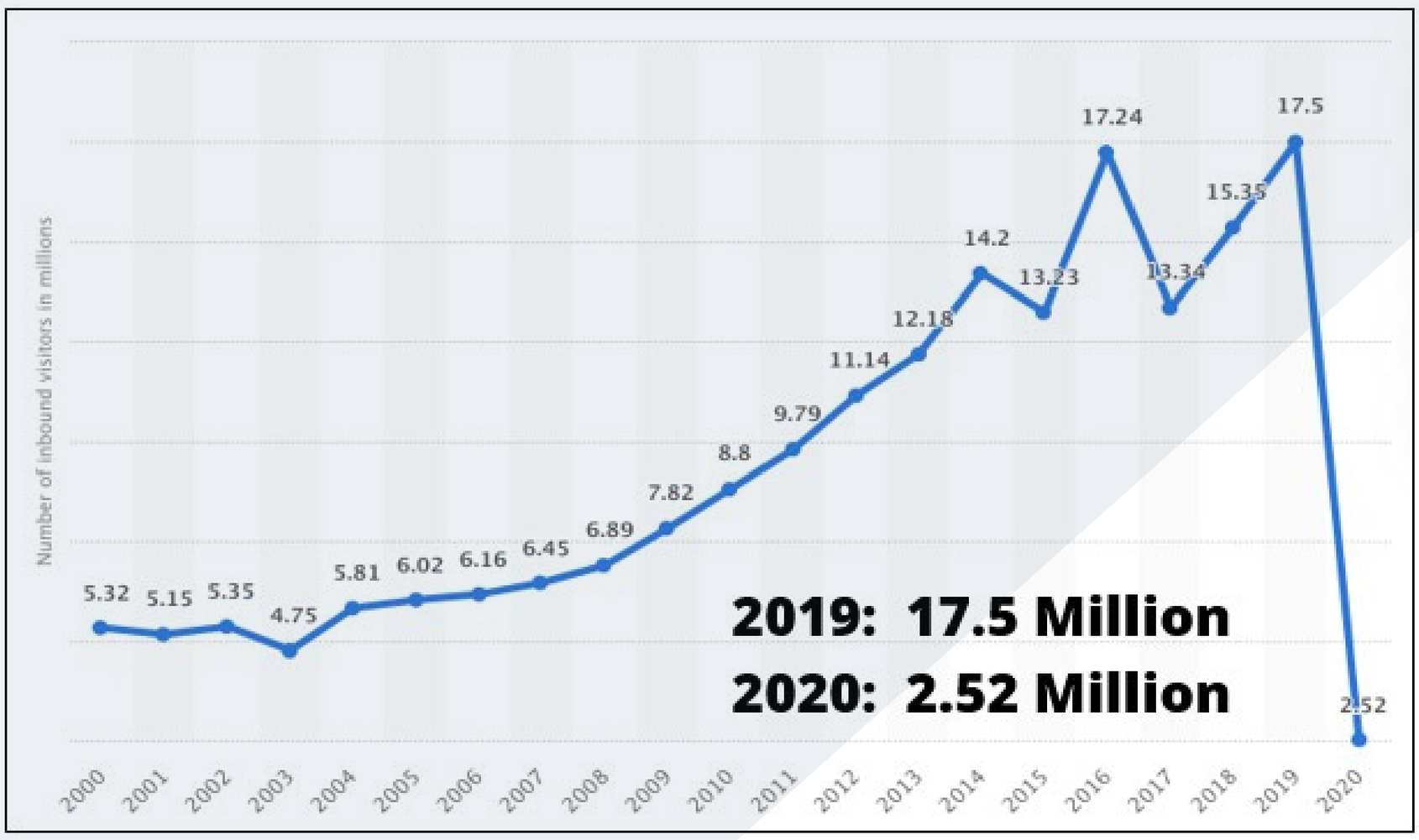
Sak-nakji

Haemul Pancake

thank you for trusting us to build your experince in South Korea!

TOURISM IN SOUTH KOREA

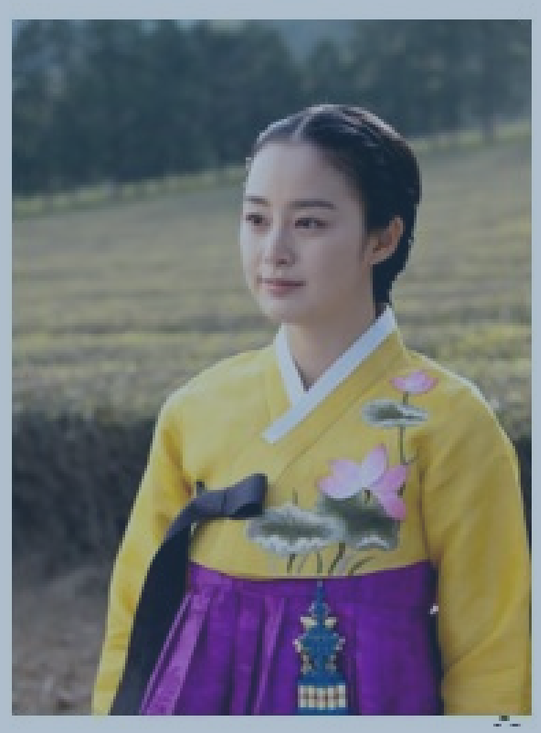
Number of Inbound Visitors to South Korea



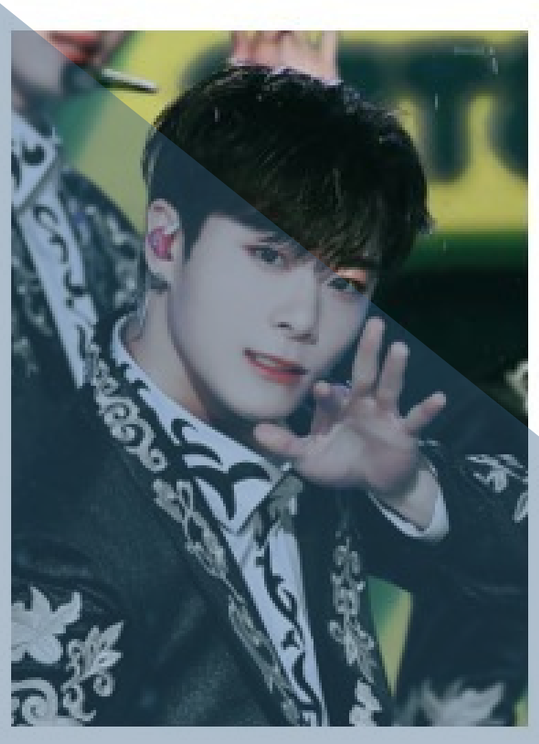


TOURISM IN SOUTH KOREA

Historial Culture



Modern Culture





SEASONS

SPRING

April to June

SUMMER

July to August

AUTUMN

September to November

WINTER

December to March



SPRING

April to June

17 °C | °F Precipitation: 0%
Humidity: 34%
Wind: 14 km/h

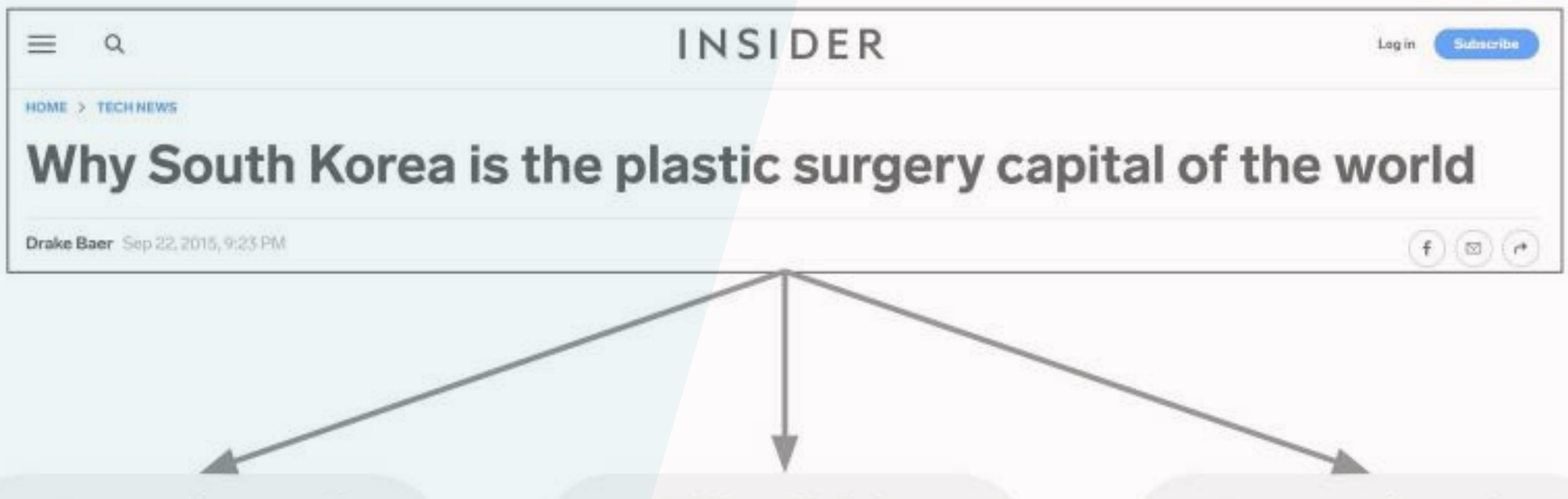
Seoul, South Korea
Thursday
Sunny

- **Month: April to June**
- **Temperature: 15°C to 18°C**

Generally perceived as the best time for tourists to visit South Korea



PLASTIC SURGERY



Experienced Doctors

Affordable Procedures

Conveniently Located Clinics



Korean Wave

Resulted in masses aspiring for the physical perfection of Korean singers/actors









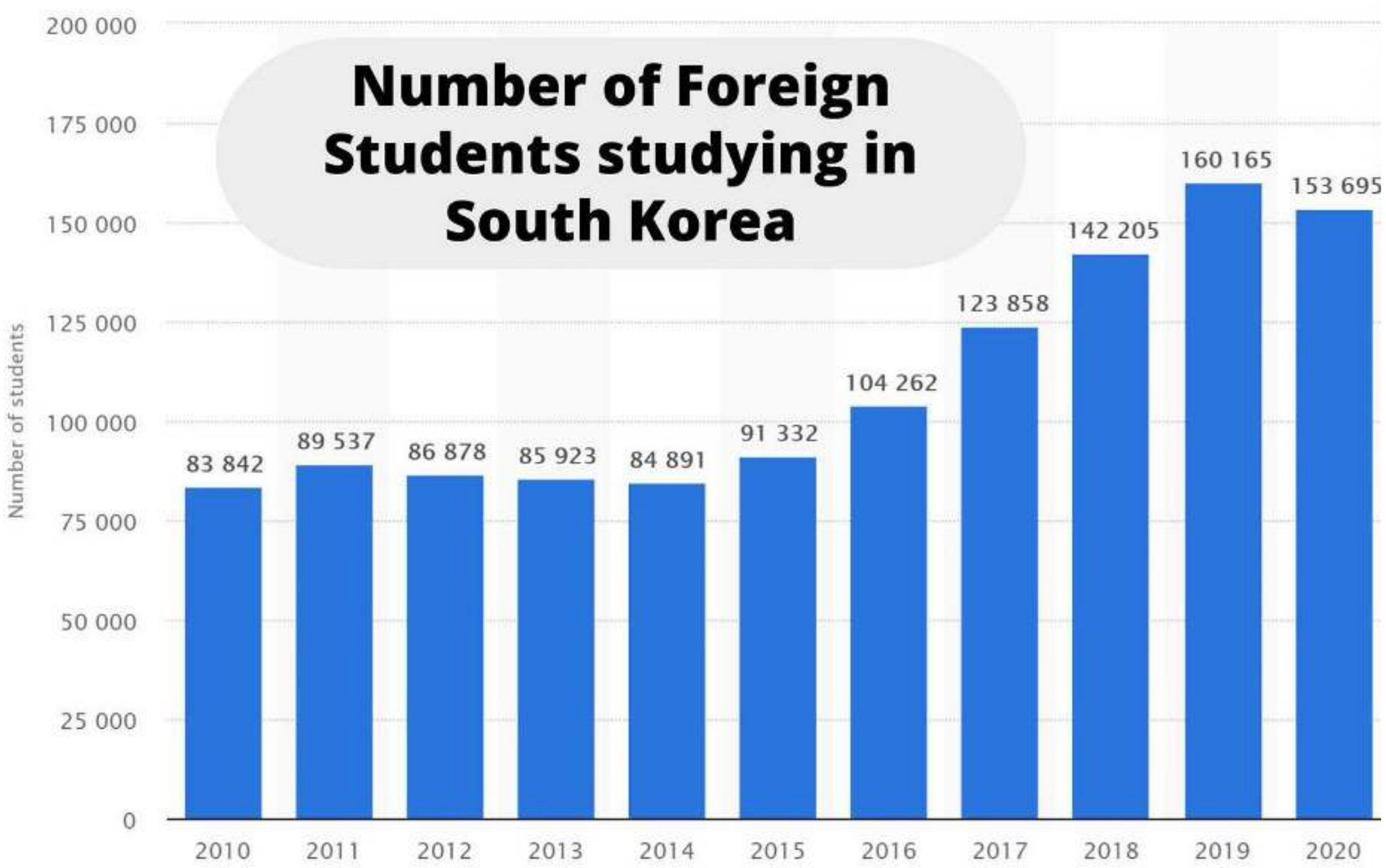
EDUCATION

Seoul National University

Korea University

Yonsei University





STREET FOOD

Ddukbokki





Tteokbokki; stir-fried rice cake

Spicy

Consists of

- ➔ Cylindrical rice cakes
- ➔ Fishcakes
- ➔ Vegetables
- ➔ Gochujang



Soondae



Traditional blood sausage

Consists of

- ➔ Rice
- ➔ Dangmyeon
- ➔ Pig's blood

Different regions, different ingredients

Chewy on the outside, soft on the inside



Hoeddeok



Hotteok

Sweeter version of western pancake

Popular during winter season

Consists of

- ➔ Cinnamon
- ➔ Honey
- ➔ Brown sugar
- ➔ Peanuts

Crunchy exterior, soft interior



TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

NAMSAN SEOUL TOWER



Namsan Seoul Tower

Accessible by cable car or through Namsan Park



Namsan Park

2 km trekking route with picturesque landscapes and exercise equipment



Love padlocks

When I finally find the one, I will put a lock here with my bb



Hanbok Culture Experience Centre

Hanbok museum

Rent different classes of *hanbok*

Take pictures at indoor studio

ANSAN MOUNTAIN



Ansan Jarak-gil Trail

Located near Gyeongbokgung Palace Station

7 km wooden deck trail

Off-road trail accessible to tourists as well

Ansan Beacon Mound at the peak of the mountain



KOREAN DEMILITARISED ZONE (DMZ)

1.2 million tourists

Roughly located along the 38th Parallel

Heavily militarised

Tourists have to follow strict rules and dress codes



STATUE OF KING SEJONG THE GREAT



Located at the centre of **Gwanghamun Square**

Main inventions of King Sejong are displayed in front of the statue (e.g. *Hangeul* alphabet, sundial, rain gauge, celestial globe)

Sejong Museum of Art located nearby.
Features different materials and artifacts of King Sejong's life & achievements



GYEONGBOKGUNG PALACE



Also known as the "Nothern Palace"

Largest, grandest, and most beautiful palace in Seoul

Popular destination during *Chuseok*

Inexpensive admission fee

Full-day *Hanbok* rental grants tourists free access into the palace

TRADITIONAL DISHES

KIMCHI



Fermented vegetables

Spicy and sour

Consist of

- → Cabbage
- → Carrots

Holds cultural significance



JAPCHAE



Mixed vegetables

Consists of

- → Glass noodles
- → Vegetables
- → Seasoned meat

Popular during festive seasons



BIBIMBAP



Consists of

- → Rice
- → Mushrooms
- → Beef
- → Fried egg
- → Namul
- → Gochujang

Different regions, different variations



KBBQ

Gogi-gui

Grilled seasoned meat

Prepared on gas or charcoal grills





OCTAGON



South Korea's *Zouk*

Located in Gangnam

Top 10 best nightclubs in the world

Comprises 3 bars, private mezzanine VIP bunkers and a swimming pool

Popular amongst tourists and celebrities

JEJU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



TANGERINE PICKING

Tangerine Picking Season: October to February

Cost: ~5,000 won / person (~$5-6 SGD)

SEONGSAN ILCHULBONG PEAK

Seongsan Ilchulbong Peak





UNESCO World Heritage Site

"Sunrise Peak"

377,872 square meters

182m above sea level

Lava cone created by a volcanic eruption 5,000 years ago



Seongsan Ilchulbong Peak







Haenyeo - Women Divers

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

'Sea mermaids' (up to their 80s)

Dive with only a knife and suit while they hold their breath

Fish for seaweed, shellfish, seafood

UNIQUE DISHES

SAN-NAKJI

Raw baby octopus

Salty, sticky, chewy

Served with sesame seeds and oil

Goes well with green tea and ssamjang





HAEMUL PAJEON

Savoury korean pancake

Consists of

- → Scallions
- → Seafood

Other variations

- → Kimchi
- → Garlic
- → Chives

Soft, chewy texture





Osulloc Tea Museum

Learn about Korea’s traditional tea culture and enjoy views of the green tea fields

One of the top 10 museums for architecture, design, & scenery in and outside the Museum

1.5 million visitors annually

Osulloc Tea Museum



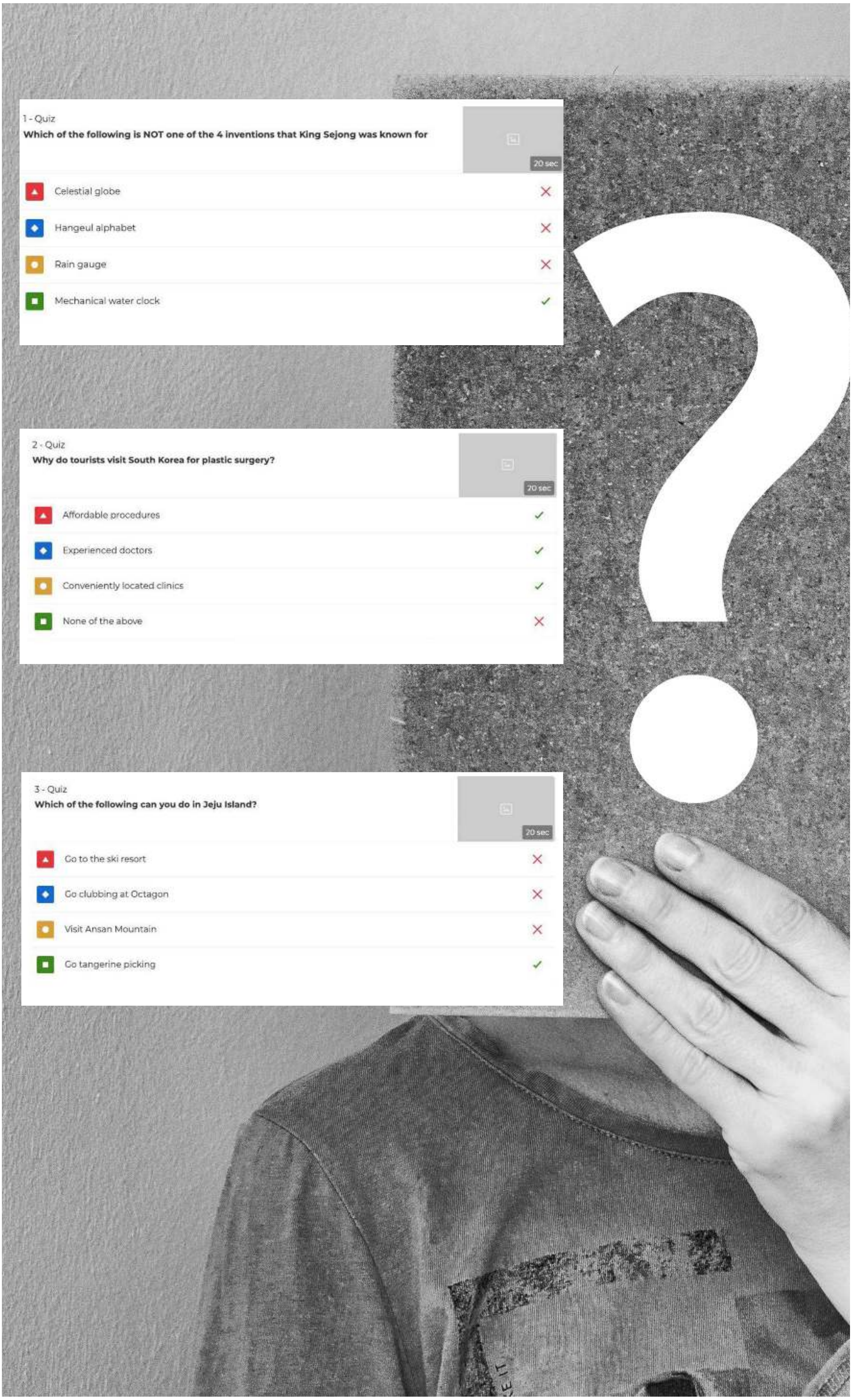


Cow island

A lava plateau formed by basaltic lava after numerous eruptions






1 - Quiz
Which of the following is NOT one of the 4 inventions that King Sejong was known for
20 sec
Celestial globe
Hangeul alphabet
Rain gauge
Mechanical water clock
2 - Quiz
Why do tourists visit South Korea for plastic surgery?
20 sec
Affordable procedures
Experienced doctors
Conveniently located clinics
None of the above
3 - Quiz
Which of the following can you do in Jeju Island?
20 sec
Go to the ski resort
Go clubbing at Octagon
Visit Ansan Mountain
Go tangerine picking




EXIT
A TRIP TO KOREA
RANKED #1
EST. 2021
CS9081 TRAVEL AGENCY



Multiculturalism & Diversity in South Korea

In order of presentation:

Loe Wei Ting, Timothy

Loo Jia Ying Alison

Tan Jia Hui Sheryl

Corinne Lee Kai Ning

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

01 BACKGROUND

Current happenings and sentiments towards multiculturalism in South Korea

02 MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTH KOREA TODAY

Current Situation, Covid-19, Future Direction

03 MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF DIVERSITY

Varying portrayals of how multiculturalism is both embraced but yet the stigma is also inherently pertinent still.

04 CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Exploitation of diversity for purposes of generating amusement and entertainment value

01
BACKGROUND

Current happenings and sentiments towards multiculturalism in South Korea



3

Multiculturalism

Defined as the presence of several **distinct cultural or ethnic groups** within a society - where culture includes races and religions manifested by behaviours and beliefs

4

Why is multiculturalism important?

1. Need for migrant labour / low-skilled workers
2. Used to symbolize **modernization** - where minority rights and equality are cherished, and to be perceived to be on par with Western liberal democracies

5

Population Statistics (Nov'19)



Total SK population: 51.7m

Foreign residents: 2.2m (4.28%)

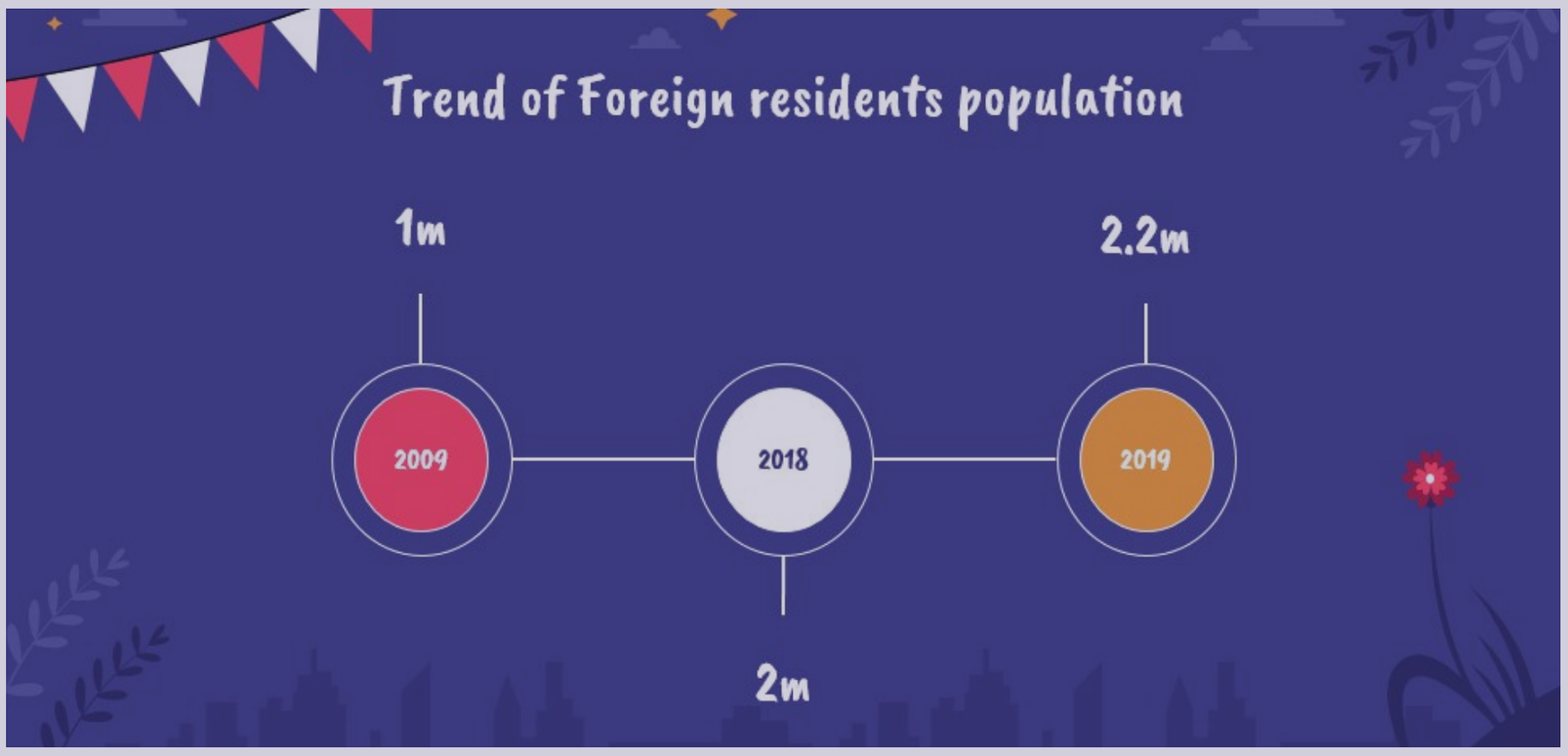
Foreign residents include those who do not have SK nationality but have lived in SK for > 3 months or naturalized SKs and their children

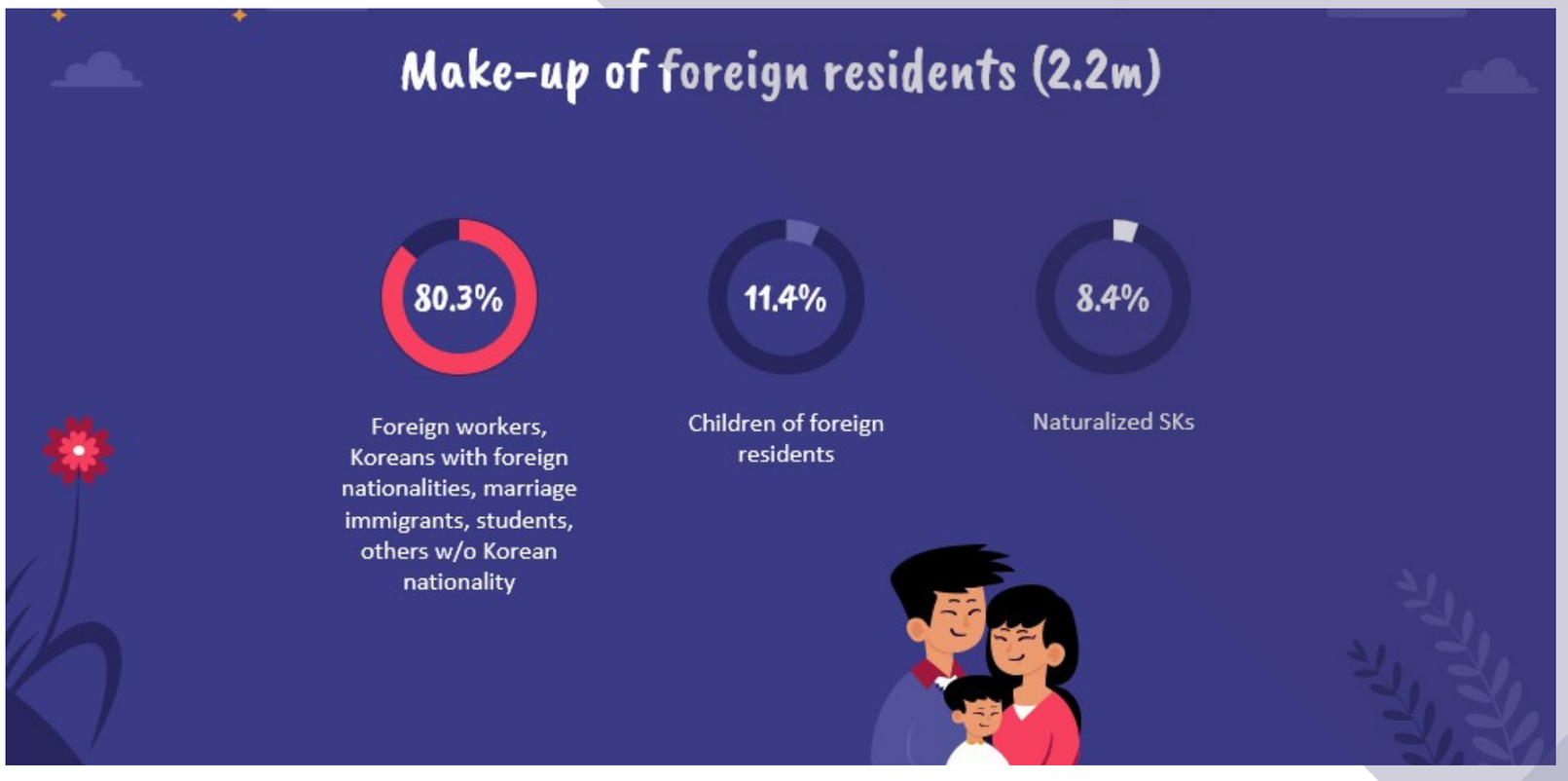
Population Statistics (Nov'19)

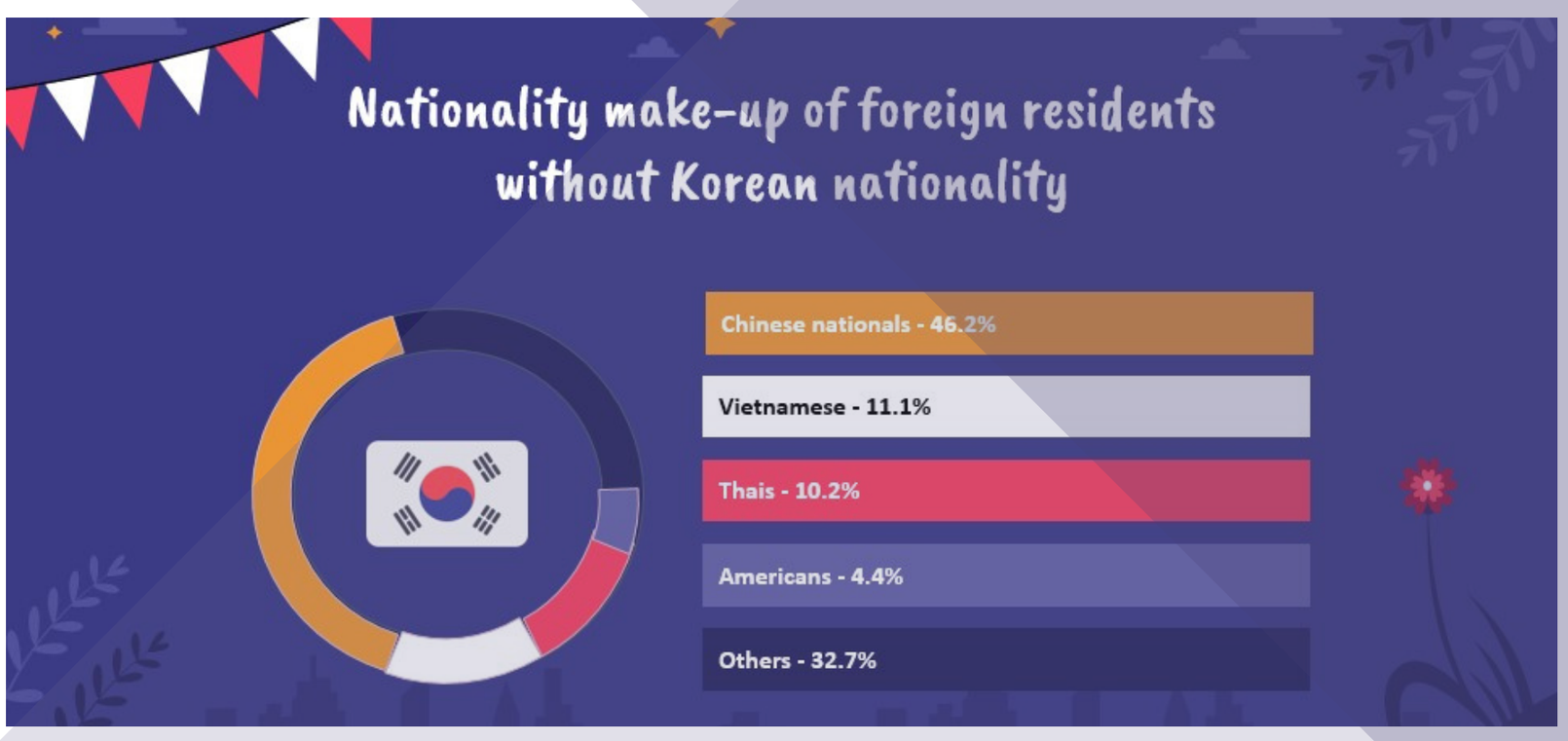


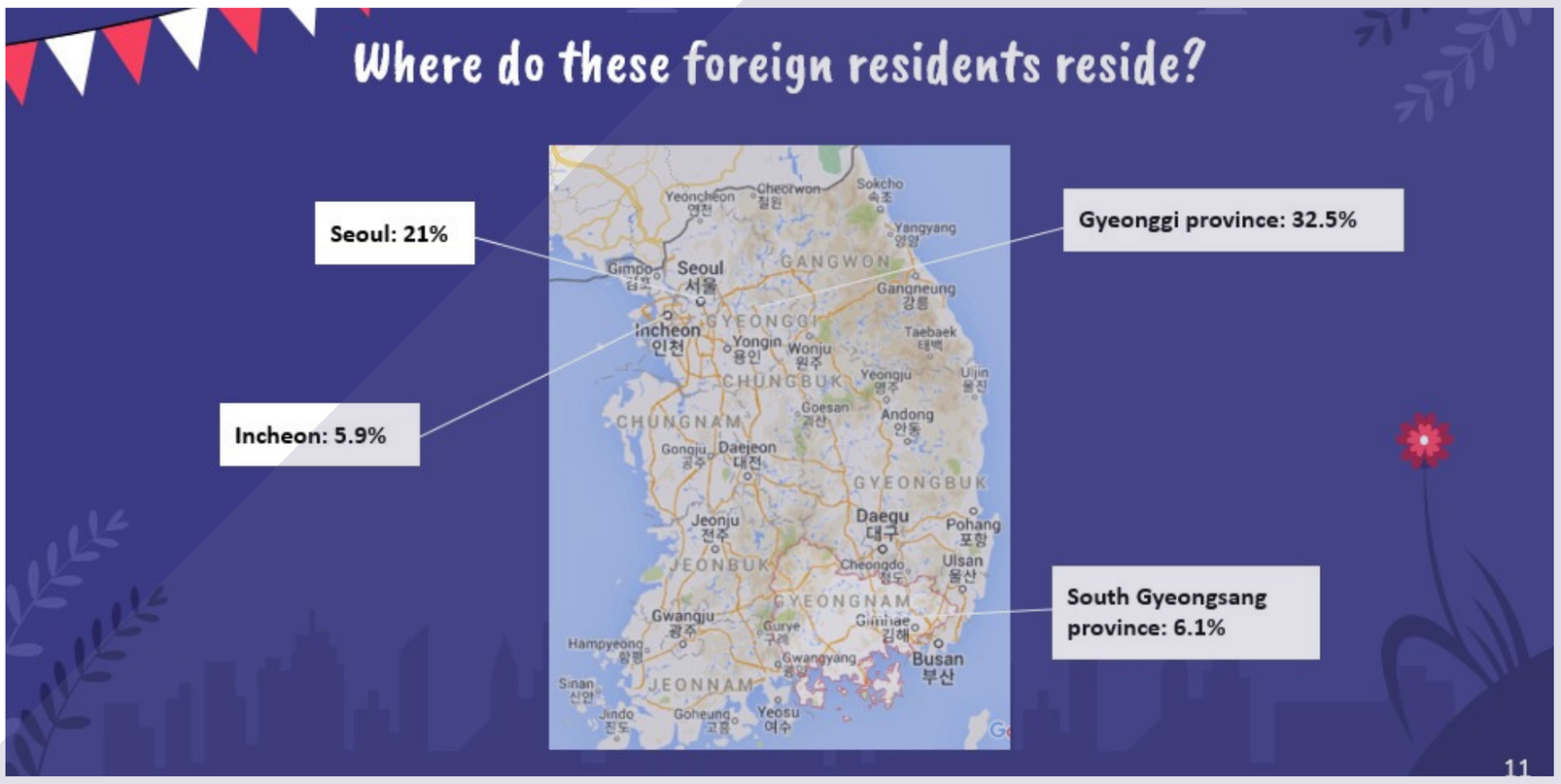
The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) classifies a nation as a multicultural and multiracial society if its percentage of foreign residents is ***in excess of 5%***

FOREIGN RESIDENTS









Traditional Mindset

South Korea is a country that takes much pride in being an ethnically, culturally, and linguistically **homogeneous** society.

They view their **mono-cultural, mono-ethinc, and mono-lingual[ism]** to be what makes them Koreans. (Koreanness as a form of national identity)

12

Current Mindset

Koreans are more willing to accept foreigners into their country - understanding the **changing dynamics of the globalised world** and reasons for stay (work, study, marriage).

But there is still resistance to be "mixed" with other races and nationalities. It is the urge to **hold on to their national identity** - the sense of nationalism and ethnocentrism.

<u>They embrace foreigners, but they do not embrace them fully.</u>

13

Sentiments towards multiculturalism

Preference towards multiculturalism	2010	2015	2020
Monoethnic, monocultural country	37.1%	38.7%	39.1%
Multiethnic, multicultural country	60.6%	49.6%	44.4%
I don't know	2.4%	11.7%	13.1%

South Korea Identity Survey (SKIS), 2005-2020

Koreans tend to display growing **acceptance and tolerance** on issues relating to the cultural benefits of multiculturalism and international marriages, yet their attitudes are becoming more **exclusionary** on matters that pose real economic threats to natives who have to compete with newcomers for jobs, benefits, and social services.

14



What Is Happening In Korea?



Strict Immigration Policies

- Workers are brought in through the Employment Permit System (EPS) to work in SMEs
- Stringent rules accompanying this system make foreign workers vulnerable to exploitation

1. Foreign workers can only renew visas for generally 3 years before they have to leave the country
2. Not allowed to bring family members with them
3. Visas are tied to employers, restricting any possibility of job hopping

What Is Happening In Korea?



Acts of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia

- Foreign workers usually work low-paying jobs, typically described as the 3Ds - dirty, dangerous, demeaning -- Such work is shunned upon by Koreans
- Other foreigner groups like marriage immigrants, childrens from mixed ethnic backgrounds also face discrimination for their background
- Koreans do not perceive immigrants to be a part of the society due to entrenched beliefs of an ethnically homogeneous society.

China-Korea Cultural Tensions



Strong Anti-Chinese sentiment despite Chinese immigrants comprising the heaviest concentration of foreign residents

Tensions between China and Korea stem from blurred lines in traditions and history

18

Kimchi: Korean or Chinese?



19

What Has Been Done So Far?

Seoul Global Center

Setting Up "Global Centres" & Multicultural Family Support Centres

- A comprehensive support center for foreign residents living in Korea.
  → Provides one stop services in: daily living, business activities, educational courses and international exchange events
- Helps foreigners living in Korea fit in more easily into society and provide support to ease their difficulties in fitting in with a new culture.

20



How COVID-19 has tested Multiculturalism in South Korea



Excluding foreigners from receiving economic aid

- Stricter eligibility criteria for receiving relief funds
- Foreigners will also have to fork out their own costs for treating covid-related illnesses if they have knowingly traveled to Korea while infectious.
- With many foreigners working in low-paying jobs, not having access to relief funds leave them economically vulnerable.

Mandatory COVID-19 testing for all foreigners and immigrant workers

- Gyeonggi province, home to thousands of immigrant workers, mandated COVID-19 testing for all foreigners - or else faced with fines.
- Implemented stringent deportation regulations if caught violating quarantine measures.
- Prompting allegations of xenophobia as foreigners are used as scapegoats for the rising of Covid cases.

South Korea's Road to Multiculturalism

Present

- Shunning away from immigrants is an entrenched stigma in Korean societies
- Citizens place great emphasis on building a society that is ethnically homogenous
- Not much have been done to include and protect foreigners on an individual and societal front

Future

- Multiculturalism is inevitable in South Korea's society
- As the population's demographic progresses towards an ageing population, there is a persistent need for an influx of labour
- South Koreans therefore need to embrace diversity and build an inclusive society through education and campaigns

03 MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF DIVERSITY



Seemingly inclusive but Anti-Black sentiments still exist in their depictions

VARIETY SHOWS

- **"My Neighbour Charles"**
  - Synopsis: Foreigners who have left their homes behind to stay in South Korea for various personal reasons share stories about how they continue to survive in the Korean society amidst several challenges.
  - Sheds light on how they face several challenges in transitioning from living overseas to relocating in South Korea.
  - Showcases inclusive and accepting responses that are welcoming towards their stay here such as empathetic attitudes.

- **"Non-Summit"**
  - Synopsis: A panel of non-Korean men, living in South Korea, who debate on various topics and "Korean culture, through the eyes of a foreigner," in a talk show format, in the Korean language.
  - Panel:
    - United Kingdom's James Hooper, National Geographic explorer and mountain climber;
    - Canada's Guillaume Patry, professional StarCraft pro-gamer;
    - Japan's Takuya Terada, a model and member of K-pop multi-national group Cross Gene;
    - Italy's Alberto Mondi, a Fiat foreign car dealer;
    - China's TV announcer Zhang Yuan;
    - United States's Tyler Rasch, a scholar at Seoul National University, who runs a webzine about Seoul.

27

ISSUES REGARDING REPRESENTATIONS







Uijeongbu High students under controversy for blackface parody



samokyere1 참 2020년에 이런 것을 보면 안타깝고 슬퍼요. 웃기지 않습니다!!!!! 저희 흑인들 입장에서 매우 불쾌한 행동입니다. 제발 하지 마세요!!!!! 문화를 따라하는 것 알겠는데 구지 얼굴 색칠 까지 해야 되요????? 한국에서 이런 행동들 없었으면 좋겠어요!!!!!! 서로의 문화를 존중하는 것 가장 좋습니다. 그리고 기회가 되면 한 번 같이 이야기 하고 싶어요.

.

.

Time and time again why won't people get that blackface is very offensive and not funny at all!!!!!! There have been so many instances both on and off air where people paint their faces black here in Korea and think it's funny! It's not and I am highly against it and highly disappointed.

.

.

You put in so much effort to educate people here in Korea and make them understand that you can appreciate a culture without making mockery of the the people. This has to stop in Korea!!! This ignorance cannot continue!!!!!

.

.

#teakpop#notoblackface#notoignorance

Han Hyun Min

1st Korean model of African descent to walk the catwalks in South Korea and internationally.

He grew up in Korea facing discrimination because of his skin colour.



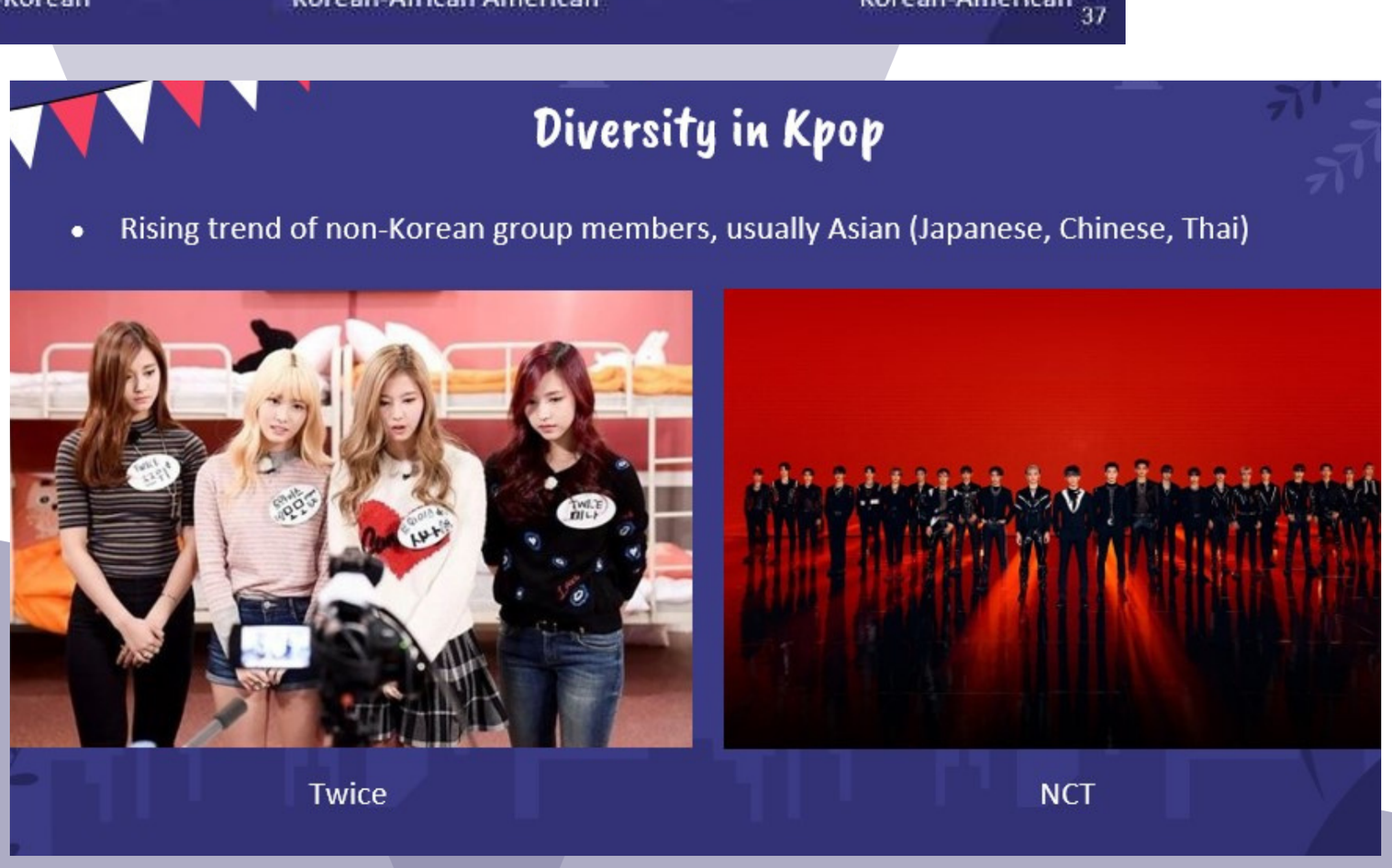
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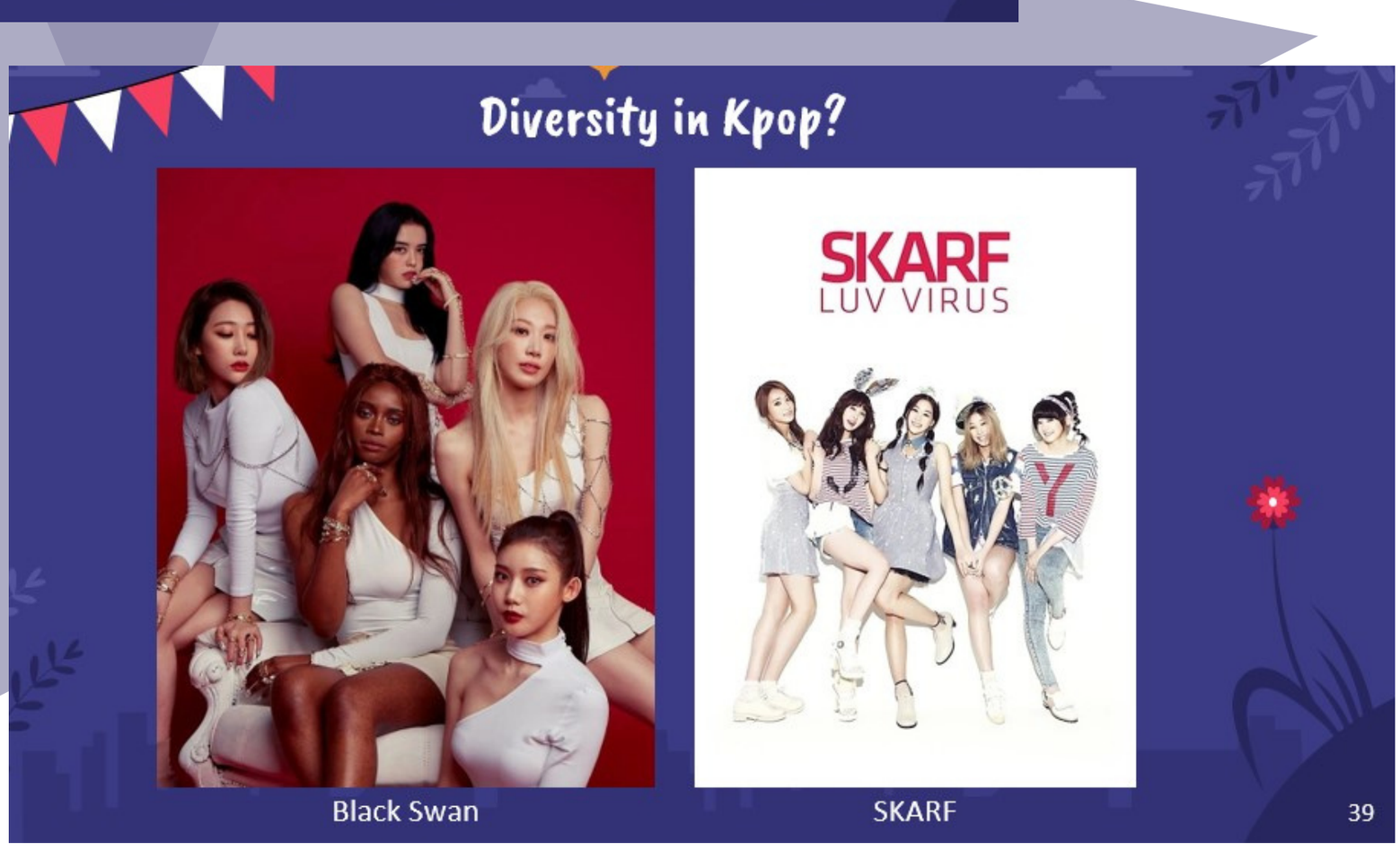
- It is clear that not enough information nor knowledge has been spread regarding this issue such that there are even concerns surrounding the grounds for legitimacy for such claims.
- Concerns surrounding racism should be treated with equal sensitivities as with any other social issues.

35


04
CULTURAL APPROPRIATION
Deep dive into the Kpop Industry
36


Multiculturalism in the Korean Music Scene
Jeon Somi:
Canadian-Dutch-Korean
Insooni (인순이)
Yoon Mirae (윤미래)
Korean-African American
Seventeen Vernon:
Korean-American
37


Diversity in Kpop
Rising trend of non-Korean group members, usually Asian (Japanese, Chinese, Thai)
Twice
NCT


Diversity in Kpop?
Black Swan
SKARF
LUV VIRUS
SKARF
39

Cultural Appropriation 문화적 전유/문화적 도용

"The act of copying or using the customs and traditions of a particular group or culture, by somebody from a more dominant (= powerful) group in society"
– Oxford Dictionary

In other words, it occurs when an individual adopts something that is not part of their own culture. Examples:

- Dance
- Music
- Fashion & Clothing
- Religious symbols
- Decoration
- Hairstyles

Cultural Appropriation vs Cultural Appreciation

Cultural *Appropriation*	Cultural *Appreciation*
• Taking an aspect of another culture and using it for personal interest or gain	• Seeking to understand and learn about another culture and being respectful about it
• Ignores the value, significance, or meaning of the culture	• Acknowledges the culture's significance or value
• Does not give credit to the original culture	• Aware of the history and origin of the culture's practice

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN KPOP

Cultural Appropriation of Music

- Kpop is influenced by many music styles, such as hip hop, R&B and reggae
- Sometimes, Kpop appropriates Hip Hop with derogatory undertones
- Hip hop/rap music is a genre originated by inner-city African Americans and Latino Americans in the Bronx of NYC



- Kpop groups draw on Black American culture from hip-hop and R&B artists of the 1990s

- E.g Use of slang: Rapper San E's part in the song 'Pride'
- Mamamoo Hwasa in her cover of Beyonce's 'Irreplaceable'

Cultural Appropriation of Music

- What is the fine line between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation?



https://youtu.be/jde8anZlikY

Cultural Appropriation of Hairstyles

- Hairstyles such as Afros, cornrows & dreadlocks are associated with Black culture and Hip hop



Rapper San E



Blackpink Lisa



Big Bang Taeyang

Cultural Appropriation in Fashion

- Using other cultures for fashion statements in Kpop concepts



Momoland “Baam” (2018)



NTX (2021)

46

Cultural Appropriation of Religious Symbols



Blackpink “How You Like That” (2018)

HELLO GUYS,
WE RECEIVED LOTS OF MESSAGES REGARDING THE DISAPPROVAL OF DEITY GANESHA USED AS AN AESTHETIC IN THE MV OF HOW YOU LIKE THAT.
WE UNDERSTAND THE SENTIMENTS OF DESI BLINKS. AS OUR ADMIN TEAM ITSELF COMPRISES OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT RELIGION INCLUDING HINDUISM. WE RESPECT EVERY RELIGION.
THANK YOU FOR MAKING US AWARE WE'LL SOON MAKE A MOVE AND TRY TO GET IN CONTACT WITH YG ENTERTAINMENT. WE REQUEST EVERYONE TO BE PATIENT.
THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING.
DESI BLINKS DO NOT SUPPORT CULTURAL DEGRADATION.

@BLACKPINKINDIA

47

Why is Cultural Appropriation important?



- There is a fine line between cultural *appropriation* and *appreciation*
- Multiculturalism: co-existence of diverse cultures
- With the rise in diversity in South Korea, it is important that the general public educates themselves on other cultures

48

Test Question #1

Which area is home to the largest number of foreign residents within South Korea?

a. Seoul
b. Incheon
c. Gyeonggi province
d. South Chungcheong province

Test Question #2

Which of the following is NOT TRUE regarding the immigration rules foreign workers face when entering Korea?

a. Foreign workers are allowed to bring family members with them
b. Foreign workers are brought in through the Employment Permit System (EPS) to work in small, medium enterprises (SMEs)
c. Their employment visas are tied to their employers
d. A work visa generally only grants workers a stay of 3 years before they have to leave the country

Test Question #3

What is the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation? (You may list any logical answers)

Cultural *Appropriation*	Cultural *Appreciation*
• Taking an aspect of another culture and **using it for personal interest or gain**	• Seeking to **understand and learn** about another culture and being **respectful** about it
• **Ignores** the value, significance, or meaning of the culture	• **Acknowledges** the culture's significance or value
• **Does not give credit** to the original culture	• **Aware of the history** and origin of the culture's practice


Current Mindset
Koreans are more willing to accept foreigners into th
understanding the changing dynamics of the globalis
reasons for stay (work, study, marriage)
But there is still resistance to be "mixed" with othe
nationalities. It is the urge to hold on to their national
sense of nationalism and ethnocentrism
They embrace foreigners, but they do not embrace
EXIT
face discrimination for their background
Koreans do not percelve immigrants to be a pa
of the society due to entrenched beliefs of an
ethnically homogeneous society.
Acts of Discrimination,
Racism, Xenophobia

South Korean Beauty Standards

Charlotte Kwok (U2031621A)
Chee Mun Yi (U2030050H)
Ang Hui Xuan Charlene (U2031902J)
Lee Yi Fang (U1910237C)
Tan Hui Xuan Valerie (U2040856L)



Agenda

1. History
2. South Korean Beauty Standards
3. Mindsets Towards Beauty
4. Modern View (Bad)
5. Modern View (Good)
6. Summary

HISTORY

History of K-Beauty

Many people think the current makeup is different from that of the past, but it's not that different in terms of ingredients and order, particularly its quest for beauty.

"K-beauty is all about creating the illusion of a flawless complexion," says Kim Chung Kyung, who is regarded as Korea's first make-up artist and has been creating looks for celebrities for more than 30 years. (Chung, 2013)

Three Kingdoms Period

Goguryeo	Baekje	Shilla
		
	(A Step Back In Time, n.d.)	manufacturing technique → face powder & rouge for lips and cheeks.

Unified Silla Period



(A Step Back In Time, n.d.)

Make-up etiquette became somewhat more extravagant than before.

The creation of lead powder was a groundbreaking invention in the makeup of cosmetics.

Ubiquity and prevalence of braided and knotted hair, cosmetics, gold headband, and rings

Women were addicted to extreme luxury and beauty (pretty much like we are now).

Goryeo Dynasty



(A Step Back In Time, n.d.)

Goryeo Dynasty followed the customs and social customs of Unified Silla.

Excellent levels of makeup demonstrated through the manufacturing of bronze mirrors and more elaborate products.

Belief that the cosmetics culture of the Goryeo Dynasty widely spread to China, especially the Yuan Dynasty.

Joseon Dynasty



(K., 2019)

Emphasis on frugalness by ruling class

Women emphasised inner beauty rather than outer beauty. But, the production of cosmetics in the Joseon Dynasty was not reduced or ignored.

Round, naturally coloured eyebrows + Peach powder on lips during holiday season

Makeup and ornamentation only offered for outings, meeting and rituals. Only gisaeng, court ladies and musicians wore thick makeup

Production and sale of cosmetics were widely diversified to show signs of industrialization.



MODERN DAY

In 2003, the South Korean government asked LG to create a premium cosmetics brand that showcases the long historical traditions of skincare in the Korean royal courts.

History of Whoo was created, and becomes one of several (expensive) brands that focus on natural medicinal herbal ingredients.



(Royal Beauty, 2020)

Here are the 6 ingredients in History of Whoo's Gongjinbidan Complex:

- ★ Siberian Deer Antler
- ★ Angelica Roots
- ★ Cornelian Cherries
- ★ Acantrophanax Root Bark
- ★ Asparagus Root
- ★ Wild Thyme

Makeup & Skincare

In traditional Korean society, makeup was broadly defined as care not only for external purposes but also internally.

- ★ "Jodu," or ground mung beans as a cleansing soap.
- ★ Camellia hair oil. Apricot, peach oils and safflower oils were used as well.
- ★ Ground rice and millet called "mibun" or "baekbun" were used as powders. Mibun was blended with water or oil to better stick to the face.
- ★ "Yeonji" or rouge extracted from safflower was applied to the cheeks and lips.
- ★ Like today the eyebrows were a key feature. Thus, eyebrow ink made from plant ash, soot in indigo, black, blue or dark brown was used to draw various shapes of the eyebrows.









(Mung Bean Face Mask, 2017)
(Ancient Asian Beauty Secret, 2016)
(Chung., 2013)
(K., 2019)

Plastic Surgery

- ★ In 2017, plastic surgery ranked second after dermatology for nationwide specialist doctor recruitments, while South Korean men spent more money on grooming than men from any other country.
- ★ All of this reflects a national psyche that places a premium on physical perfection -- a mindset that can be traced back to Korea's colonial past and that accords with modern-day South Koreans' desire to fit in.
- ★ Many people regard double-eyelid surgery as merely an extension of the tape and glue fixes.

Everyday Diet

Characteristics of a typical Korean diet:

- Rice and grain based recipes
- Fermented foods
- Vegetables from wild landscapes & seas
- More legumes, fish & less red meat
- Medicinal herbs
- Sesame & perilla oil
- Limited deep-fry cooking
- Meals based on seasonal produce
- Home cooked meals

(Kim et. al, 2016)

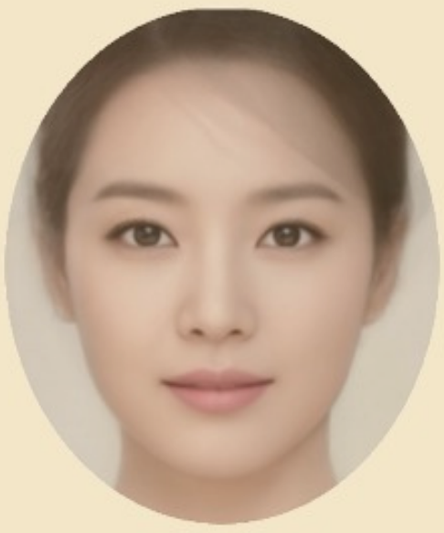
BEAUTY STANDARDS

Most Important Facial Features

★ Harmony of facial features

★ Skin condition

★ Facial expression



(Rhee, 2017)

Korean Female Beauty Standards

Standards do not really evolve, society enforces an ideal image
(*Korean Versus Western Beauty Standards*, 2020)

Facial Features

★ Small, petite fairy-like face
★ Double eyelids

Body Size

★ Slim, petite figure



Skin Complexion

★ Clear, smooth and fair skin

Korean Male Beauty Standards

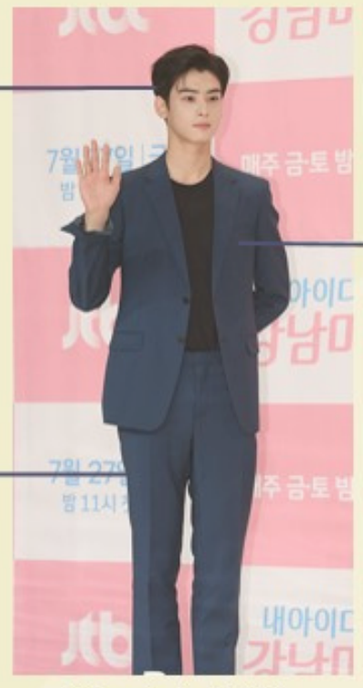
Make-up used widely by Korean men

Facial Features

★ High nose
★ Small and slender facial features

Body Size

★ Androgyne, rather than muscular
★ Tall



Skin Complexion

★ Clear, smooth and fair skin (similar to women!)

(Dispatch, 2018)

MINDSETS TOWARDS BEAUTY

Appearance as a Symbol of Status

(Cho, 2020)

- ★ Classist country where great appearance equates to elitism, success and high social standing
- ★ Appearing elite and successful becomes the ultimate beauty standard to achieve



E.g. Pale skin = Elite

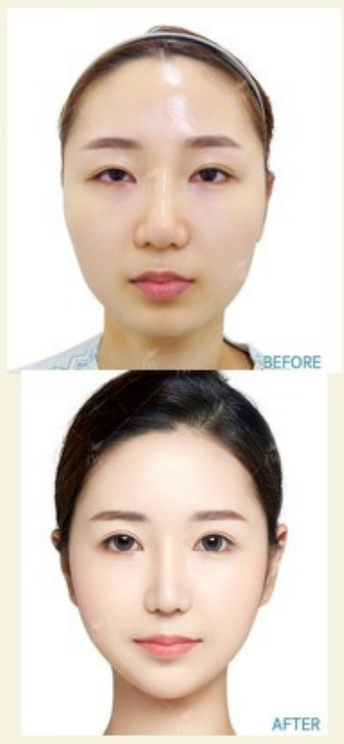
(Jin, 2020)

- ★ Past agricultural Korean society: privileged class did not have to work laborious outdoor jobs
- ★ Dark skin tones associated with lower class

Gaining Opportunities

(Cho, 2020)

- ★ Good looks → privilege of opportunities and receiving better treatment
- ★ E.g. the better looking your resume photo, the more likely you will get the job
- ★ Beauty is more important than intellectual abilities and skills
- ★ Teaches young generation unhealthy attitudes toward beauty



(JW Plastic Surgery, n.d.)

Conformity

- Prevalence of Cosmetic Surgery
- K-Beauty Trends: Diets & Cosmetics
- One-dimensional View of Beauty
- Norm to emphasise appearance

To preserve chemyeon, 'social face' and avoid falling victim to lookism.



Conformity

Prevalence of Cosmetic Surgery



(DailyMail , 2013)

Case Study: Model Hang Mioku

★ Desperate to get more plastic surgery till the point where she injected fish oil into her face after doctor's refusal to give her more surgery

(Evans, 2013)

Conformity

Prevalence of Cosmetic Surgery



(Vice, 2015)

Case Study: Plastic Surgery on 8 Year Old

★ Plastic surgeon revealed his youngest patient to be 8 years old
★ Decision made by daughter's mother who wanted her to become a child actress

(Koreaboo, 2019)

Conformity

K-Beauty Trends: Kpop Diets

Malnutrition and a form of starving glorified by these trends

The 50 kg Myth (Adolph, 2020)

★ An ideal created by media
★ Shames women who weigh over 50kg
★ Ideal is perpetuated by Korean celebrities who openly discuss weighing 40 kg
★ Being underweight is glorified



(KpopKart, 2019)

Conformity

K-Beauty Trends: Cosmetics

★ Companies manufacture and produce products that mainly cater to light, pale skin
★ Rare manufacturing of products that cater to darker skin tones
★ The popular use of whitening products

(Cho, 2020)

(ProductNation, n.d.)

One-dimensional View of Beauty

(Cho, 2020)

★ Creates homogeneity

★ Little room for appearing different or for having unique facial features

★ Trends are essential to follow and individuality is not typically glorified nor positively reinforced



(Medium, 2019)

Norm to Emphasise on Appearance

(Cho, 2020)

★ Normal to compare one's features to others at a young age, part of casual conversation

★ Subconsciously choose their circle of friends based on attractiveness rather than their character as a result of this internalised 'norm'

★ Some even receive plastic surgery as birthday gifts and graduation gifts

★ While these ideals of Korean beauty are concerning to foreign eyes, Koreans do not see the fuss, especially since it benefits them in terms of jobs and success

MODERN VIEWS (BAD)

Lookism (Lee, 2016)

★ Mechanism that controls one behaviours towards and relationship with their own body

★ Not only about self-maintenance, but the perception that "unbeautiful women are seen as lazy and incapable" (p.17)

★ Discrimination (eg: job-hunting, marriage) deemed normal and acceptable

Lookism

In the global context

★ Hallyu
  - Indonesia
  - Vietnam
  - Medical tourism

In the domestic context

★ Mass media
★ Celebrity culture
★ Cultural norms

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

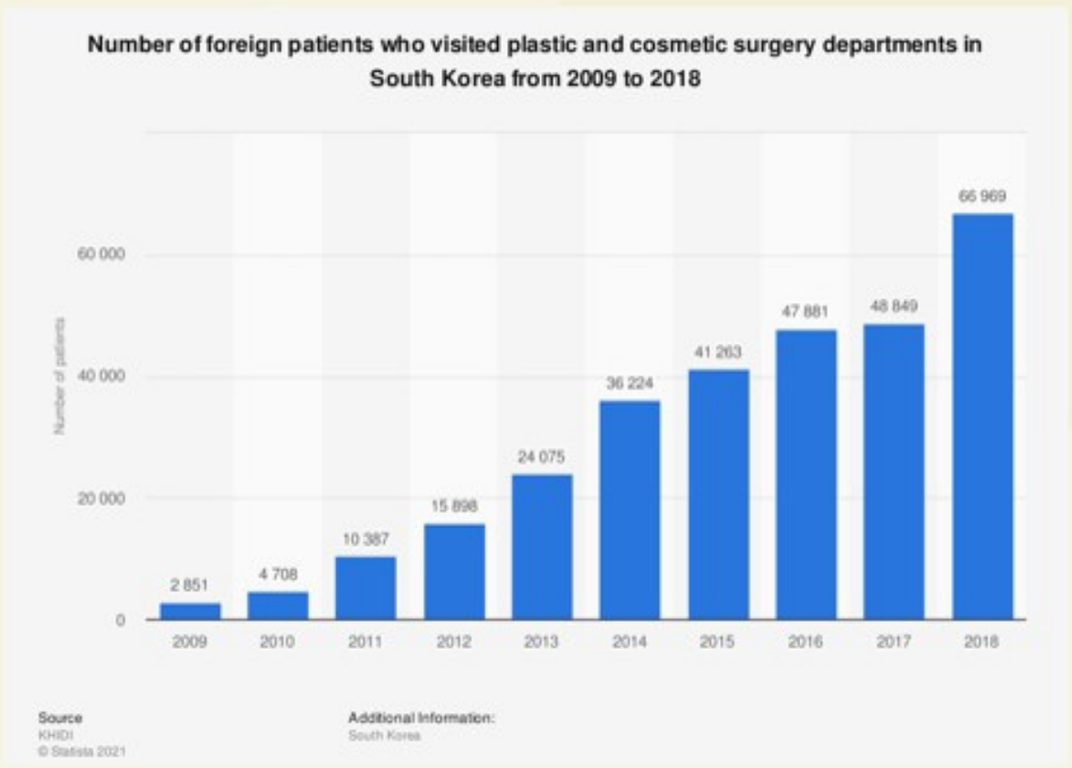
Through the Hallyu Wave

Indonesia (Halim & Kiatkawsin, 2021)

- ★ Through K-Dramas, more women have invested in Korean beauty brands
- ★ Influenced by the physical appearance of the actors in the dramas
  - Visual appearances of celebrities affects brand perceptions
  - Indirect adoption of Korean beauty standards

Vietnam (Lee, 2016)

- ★ Sex workers model themselves after K-Pop stars
  - Through clothes, makeup, body modification, etc



(KHIDI, 2019)

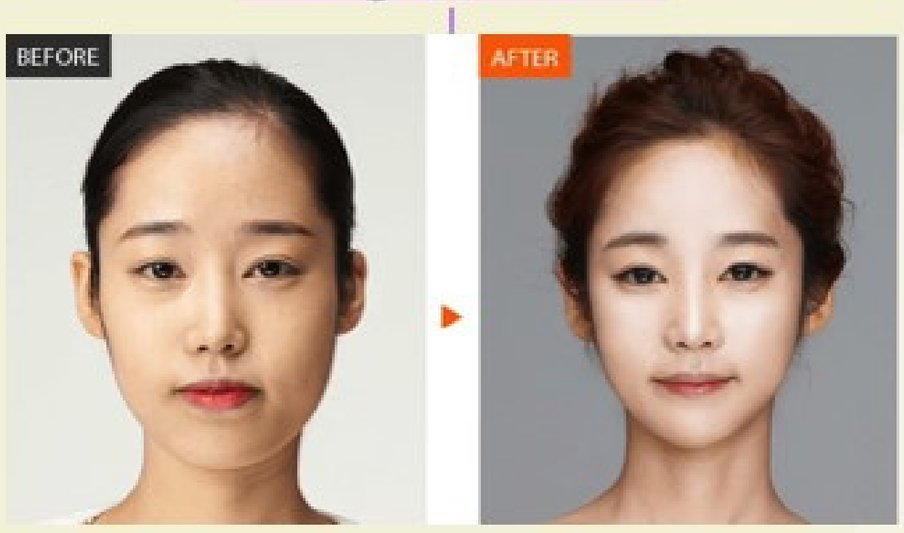
Medical Tourism

- ★ Medical tourism sector doesn't even spend much on advertising, Hallyu does it for them (Lee, 2016)
- ★ Foreign patients visit just for plastic and cosmetic surgery
  - Due to excellent outcomes and quality (KHIDI, 2019)

DOMESTIC INFLUENCE

Mass Media

TV Programmes



(*Double Jaw Surgery*, 2018)

K-Pop TV Programmes

Kindergarten students with body image concerns (H. Kim & Han, 2020)

Celebrity Culture

Popularisation of Plastic Surgery

Patients coming in with pictures of celebrities faces who they want to copy (Cho, 2011)

Popularisation of Dieting Culture

IU diet (Jeong, 2021)

Seolhyun diet (Korea Times, 2018)

Cultural Norms

- ★ Use of terms 'self-management', 'self-development', 'self-investment' in advertisements for makeup/skincare/plastic surgery/dieting (Lee, 2016)
- ★ Looks are critical for future success
  - 14 year olds walking into plastic surgery offices after school (Ko, 2002)
  - Double eyelid surgery being a common graduation gift (Ko, 2002)

MODERN VIEWS (GOOD)

- ★ Makeup is not just for women, men can **feel more masculine** in their own way by wearing it
- ★ In Korea, makeup has **no gender** or **sexuality**
- ★ They prove that makeup only **enhances one's confidence**, which seems to be what masculinity is all about



(kstarlive, 2019)

Influence in masculinity

(Yi, 2020)

Free the corset movement

(Haas, 2018)

Purpose: Create space for Korean women to feel comfortable with themselves and not have social pressures limit their identity

- ★ Fighting against **unrealistic beauty standards**
- ★ Destroyed makeup, cut their hair and rejected getting surgery
- ★ Post videos on social media with catch-cry 'escape the corset'



(The Guardian, 2018)



(koreanradfem, 2019)

- ★ South Korea is becoming **one of the major centres** for medical tourism in Asia
- ★ Nearly **50,000** foreigners have come to South Korea for a beauty makeover 2017, spending **215 billion won**



(jivaka.care, 2019)



(kyleeinkorea, 2016)

Booming comestic surgery industry

(IMTJ, 2018)

Help to lead a normal life

(Chow, 2018)

- ★ Example (TV program: Let Me In)
  - Plastic surgery is **crucial** in some cases
  - Candidate was **living in immense pain**, not able to sleep or swallow any food
  - Regain long lost **self esteem**, **confidence** and **dignity**



(myseoulsecret, 2013)



(elinchow, 2014)



Summary

★ Standards of Korean beauty have been enforced since the Three Kingdoms era

★ Modern Korean beauty standards are unrealistic

★ Toxic mindsets that Koreans adopt towards beauty

★ Effects of Korean beauty standards have been bad and good

Discussion Question

What are Singapore's beauty standards?

- No real exact beauty standards
- Cobbled together from other countries
- Fair skin, straight hair, thin, circle lens, petite
- No particular standard for males

Quiz Questions

Q1. Which is <u>not</u> a Korean beauty standard for women?

(a) Clear, smooth and fair skin
(b) Double eyelids
(c) Small hands
(d) Slim and petite figures

Q2. What is the Korean term for 'social face'?

(a) Jodu
(b) Mihun
(c) Chemyeon
(d) Baekhun

Q3. List <u>any 2</u> good modern effects of beauty standards

★ Free the corset movement
★ Influence on masculinity
★ Booming cosmetic surgery industry
★ Help to lead a normal life

(any 2)


EXIT
Agenda
1
History
2
South Korean
Beauty Standards
4
Modern View
(Bad)
5
Modern View
(Good)


(The Guardian, 2018)
(koreanradfem, 2019)

Globalisation of Hangul

Presenters: Megan Lim En, Tan Jolnn, Choo Gan Kay Cheryl, Chin Kai Lee

Contents:

1. History of Hangul
2. Introduction to Hangul
3. Globalisation of Hangul
    a. Contemporary Hangul
    b. Cia-cia language
    c. Solomon Islands
    d. Taiwanese Hangul


"A wise man can acquint himself with them before the morning is over; a stupid man can learn them in the space of ten days."

HISTORY OF HANGUL

Before 1443

Writing with Classical Chinese
(and other native phonetic scripts)

Hanja 한자 or 漢字

- Chinese characters were used to transcribe the sound of Korean words
- Gap between Chinese characters and Korean language
- Nonetheless, a large amount of historical texts are recorded in this fashion

Class divide

- Many lower class Koreans were illiterate
- Mastery of Chinese was restricted to the elites and a way to centralise the power and privilege



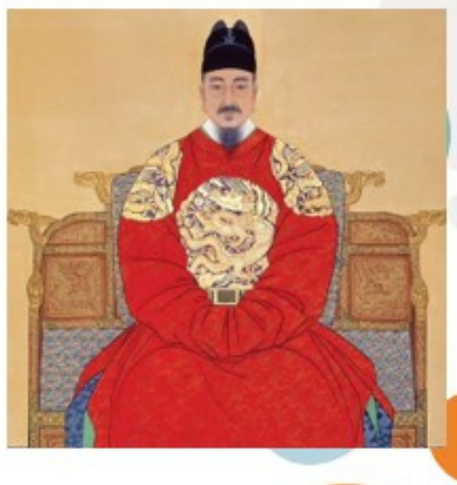
Cheonjamun-One Thousand Classics
Basic textbook to learn 1000 Chinese characters arranged into four-character idioms

1443

Invention of Hangul
Chosun Dynasty (1393-1910)

King Sejong, inventor

- King Sejong was known as one of the greatest rulers of Korea
- Invented Hangul to promote literacy amongst the common people



Opposition

Secret Project

- King Sejong kept the project secret at first, knowing that the ruling class would be opposed to commoners gaining access
- Hangul faced opposition from literary elite and Korean Confucian scholars
  - Believed Hanja was the only legitimate form of writing
  - Threat to their status

1446

Publication of Hunminjeongeum 훈민정음

Hunminjeongeum

- Translates to: The Proper Sounds for the Education of the People
- Anyone could use the Hunminjeongeum document to educate themselves on Hangul

Introduction into Popular Culture

- Despite opposition from elites, Hangul was adopted by women and writers of popular fiction

Legacy of Hunminjeongeum

- October 9 is now National Hangul Day



Hunminjeongeum Haerye
訓民正音解例; Explanations and Examples of the Correct/Proper Sounds for the Instruction of the People", a commentary on the *Hunminjeongeum*, the original promulgation of hangul

1504 — **King Yeonsangun bans study of Hangul**
After commoners put up posters making fun of him in Hangul

1506 — **King Jungjong abolishes the Ministry of Eonmun**
Which was a governmental institution related to Hangul research



Hong Gildong Jeon
홍길동전
One of the most important early novels written in Hangul and in Korea

1500s — **Revival of Hangul**
Especially with the flourishing of Sijo and Gasa poetry, and popularity of Hangul novels

1796 — **First introduction of Hangul to the Western world**
Led by Dutch coloniser Isaac Titsingh

1894 — **Official adoption of Hangul in official documents**
Due to growing Korean nationalism, Gabo reforms and Western missionaries push of Hangul in schools and literature

1895-6 — **Growing adoption of Hangul**
Elementary schools adopt Hangul in 1895 and Tongnip Sinmun is the first newspaper to be published in Hangul and English.



First issue of the Tongnip Sinmun

1910 - 1945 — **Effects of Japanese colonisation on Hangul**

- Japanese made the official language of Korea
  - Banned Korean literature
  - Korean language banned from schools, Japanese becomes the main language of instruction (1938)
  - Outlawing of all Korean publications (1941)
- Colonial reforms to the orthography of Hangul



Classroom in Korea under Japanese colonial rule

1946 - present — **Definitive modern Hangul orthography**

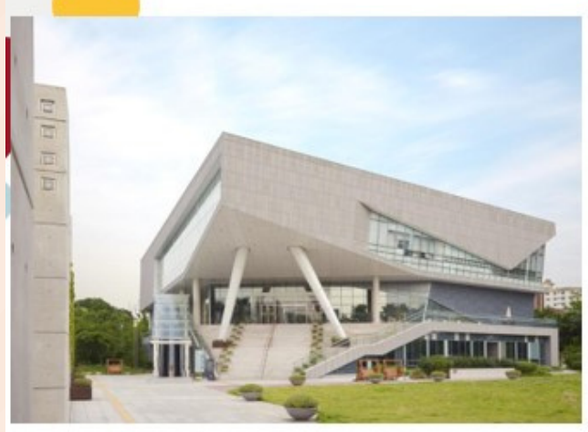
South Korea
- ➔ *Hangeul Matchumbeop Tong-iran (1933)*
- ➔ *Korean Orthography + Standard Language Regulations (1988)*

North Korea
- ➔ *Adoption of pure Hangul, banning of Hanja completely (1949)*
- ➔ *Revisions according to Juche ideology (1960 - 1987)*



The poster of March 1960 South Korean presidential election. Note that the surname Lee which is written as "이" in South Korea today of Syngman Rhee and Lee Ki-poong were still printed as "리".

National Hangeul Museum (Seoul, Korea)







Established in 2014 in the Yongsan district, near the National Museum of Korea

- Showcases the cultural and political context, linguistic structure and evolution of the Korean alphabetical character system known as Hangul

Some fun things from the museum...



First Hangul typewriter
Invented by Gong Byeong-wu in 1949

Commercialised in 1950 and distributed during the Korean War



Special Exhibition: Korean Pop Lyrics — Melodies of Life







This exhibition celebrates the magic of the Korean language through the lyrics of pop songs, the melodies of our lives. The first section–"Power of Lyrics"–examines the lyrics of some of the most beloved pop songs in Korea's history, which have brought comfort and joy to millions by representing their lives in words and music.

Brief introduction on the characteristics of Hangul



Korean Alphabet

Consonants

ㄱ	ㄴ	ㄷ	ㄹ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㅇ	ㅈ	ㅊ	ㅋ	ㅌ	ㅍ	ㅎ
g,k	n	d,t	r,l	m	b,p	s	ng	j	ch	k	t	p	h

↑ silent in initial position

ㄲ	ㄸ	ㅃ	ㅆ	ㅉ
kk	tt	pp	ss	jj

Vowels

ㅏ	ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅡ	ㅣ
a	ya	eo	yeo	o	yo	u	yu	eu	i

father saw home moon put meet

ㅐ	ㅒ	ㅔ	ㅖ	ㅘ	ㅙ	ㅚ	ㅝ	ㅞ	ㅟ	ㅢ
ae	yae	e	ye	wa	wae	oe	wo	we	wi	ui

hand set wet

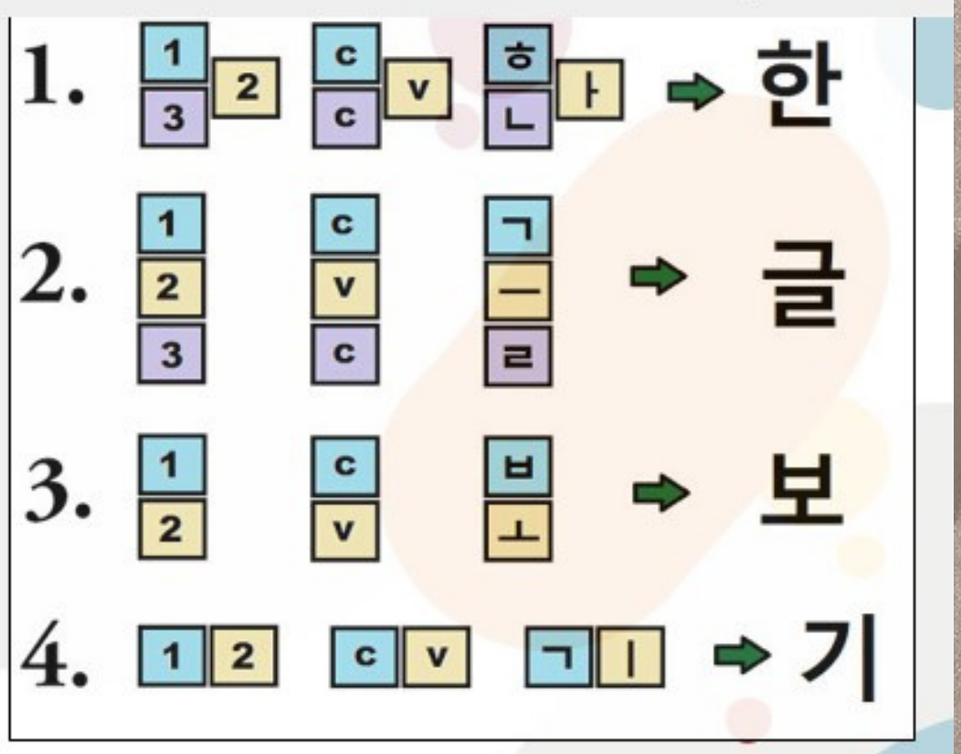
Ways of composition of Hangul

Korean syllable always starts with a consonant and the second is always a vowel. The third can be empty or consonant.

In the consonant spot, it can be a single character eg. ㄱ or a double character eg. ㄲ.

For vowels, there are vertical vowels ㅏ ㅑ ㅐ ㅒ ㅓ ㅕ ㅔ ㅖ ㅣ and horizontal vowels ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ ㅡ.

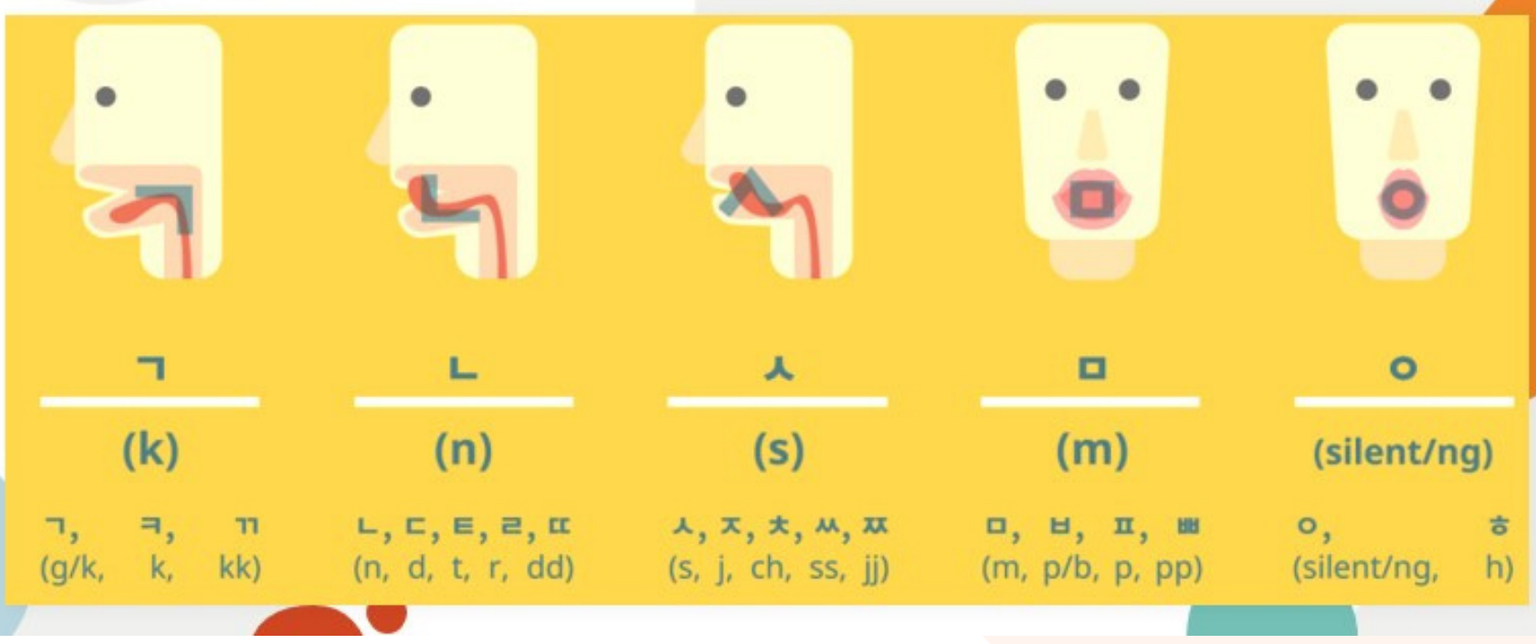
C for consonant, v for vowel, 123 for positions



Easy Korean, 2017

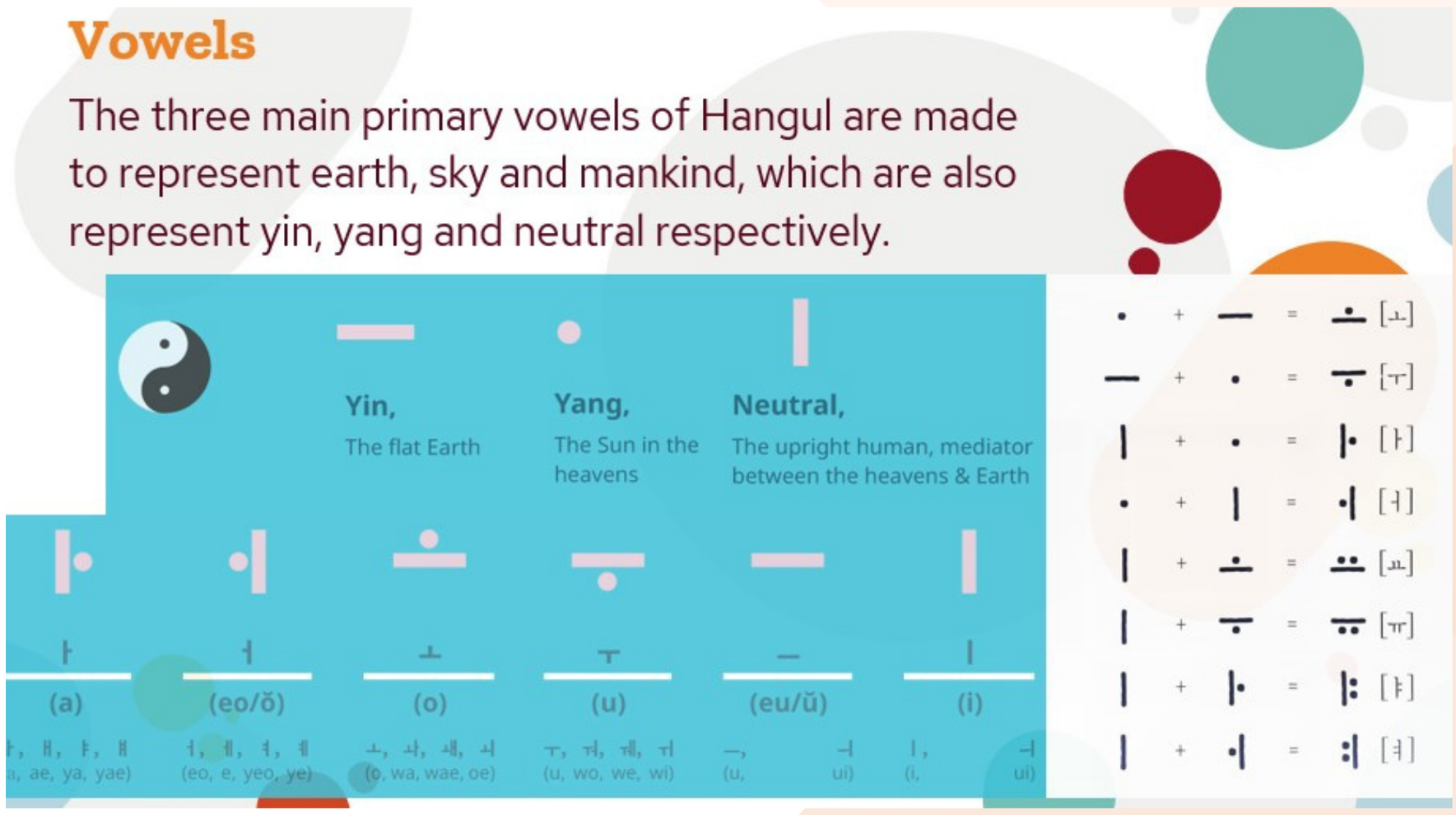
Consonants

The five primary consonants are made after the shape of vocal organs. Other consonants are made by adding strokes to the primary letters.



Vowels

The three main primary vowels of Hangul are made to represent earth, sky and mankind, which are also represent yin, yang and neutral respectively.



Obsolete Korean letters

Several sounds found only in foreign languages once did have Hangul letters to represent them, but these letters have now become obsolete. It is unknown as to how exactly these letters sound.

ㅿ: [z]

ㆁ: [ŋ]

ㆆ: [ʔ]

ㅎㅎ: [x] or [ɦ]

ㆄ: [l] (only used in transcribing Chinese)

ㄵㅎ: [t̪͡h̪]

ㅱ: [w] (only used in transcribing Chinese)

ㅸ: [β] or [v]

ㅹ: [v] (only used in transcribing Chinese)

ㅹ: [fʱ] (only used in transcribing Chinese)

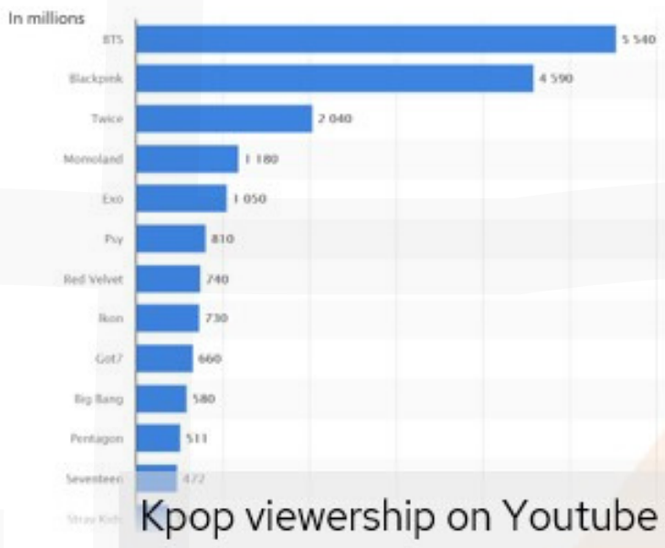
ㆍ: [ʌ] or [ɐ]

An estimation of the

Globalization of Hangul

Globalisation of Hangul

South Korea popular culture, soap operas, music, kpop stars had mesmerized much of Asia. Many individuals who are interested and intrigued by the Korean pop culture are starting to take up Hangul.



Kpop viewership on Youtube



Globalisation of Hangul

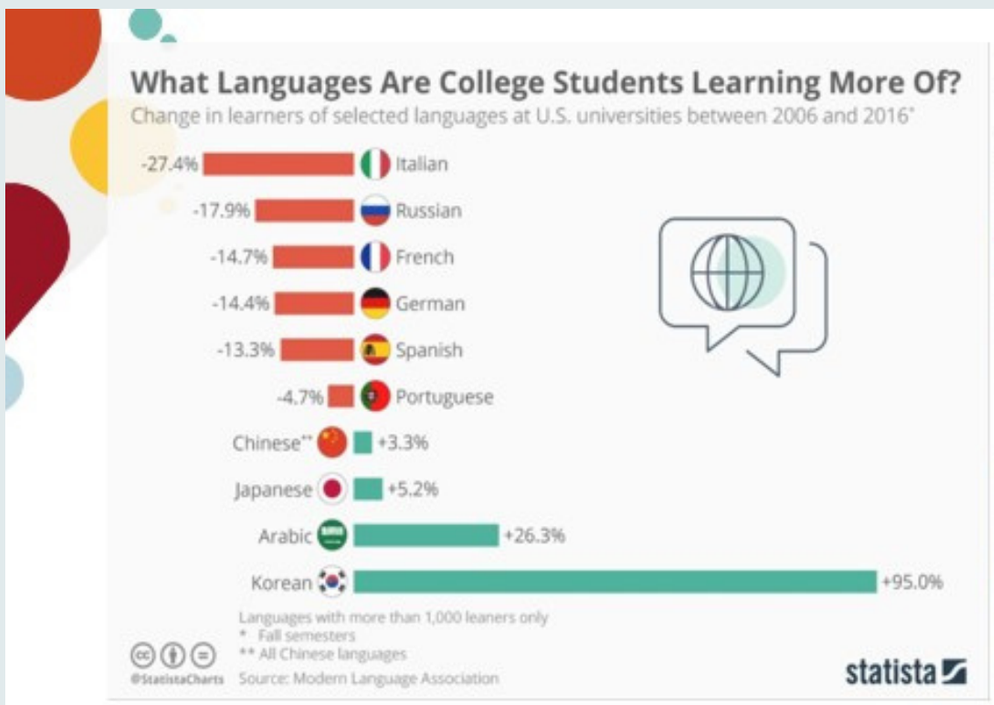
With the increasing popularity of Korean pop culture, many businesses, the tourism industries, the economy and national prestige has benefitted from it.

The South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism invested USD 75.2 million on promoting Korea's Hangul alphabet.



Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
Republic of Korea





There is an increasing number of people all around the world, taking up Korean language after learning about the song Gangnam style. Korean dramas and kpop also greatly influenced people to take up Korean language to actually understand and learn about the culture.



K-pop drives boom in Korean language lessons

By Matt Pickles
BBC News global education

11 July 2018

Korean is rapidly growing in popularity, in a language-learning boom driven by the popularity of the country's pop stars.

A desire to learn the lyrics of K-Pop hits like Gangnam Style has boosted the Korean language's popularity explode in countries like the US, Canada, Thailand and Malaysia.

A report by the Modern Language Association shows that Korean uptake in US universities rose by almost 14% between 2013 and 2016, while overall language enrolment was in decline.

The latest statistics show 14,000 students are learning Korean in the US, compared to only 163 two decades earlier.

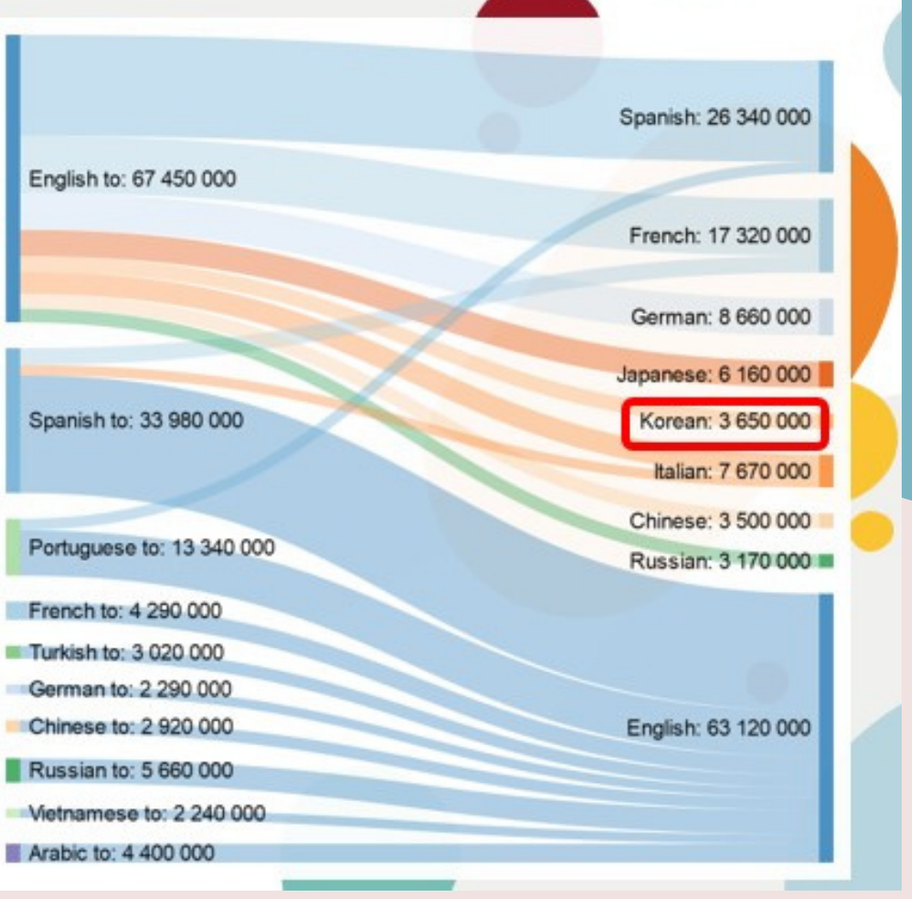
The language learning website Duolingo launched a Korean course last year because of rising demand. It quickly attracted more than 200,000 pupils.

Globalization of Hangul

On DuoLingo, a hugely popular free language-learning app with over 300 million users worldwide, some 3.3 million are taking the Korean course.



duolingo



Globalization of Hangul





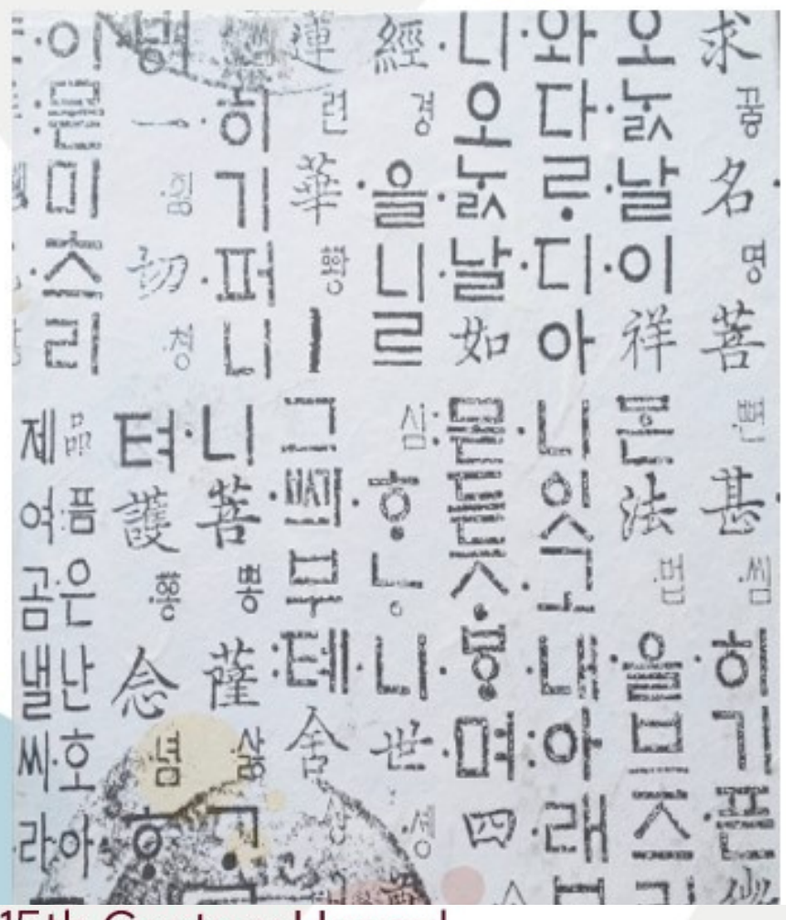
With greater incentives and influence of Korean language, and considering the fact that Hangul is one of the more manageable and straightforward written languages, people of different places around the world have picked up the Hangul as their written language. Korea has also came forth with various platforms to ensure that Hangul is being propagated to the world.

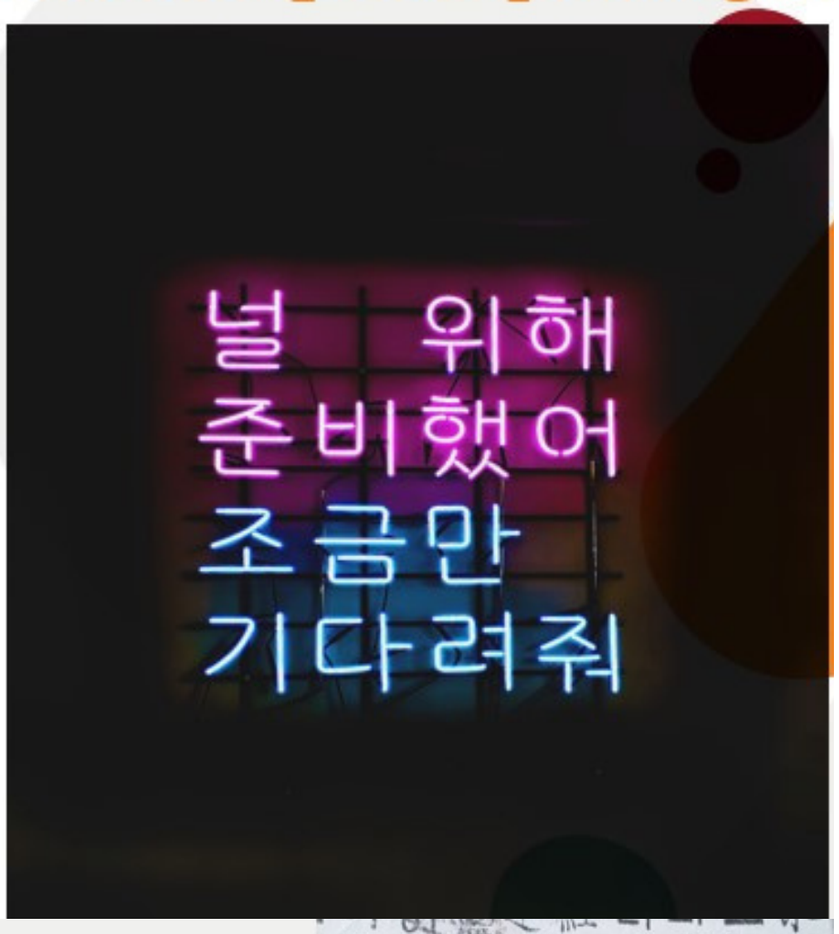
HUNMINJEONGGEUM

Hunminjeonggeum (훈민정음)

- Document describing an entirely new and native script for the Korean Language
- Created so that the common people illiterate in Hanja could accurately, easily read and write the Korean language

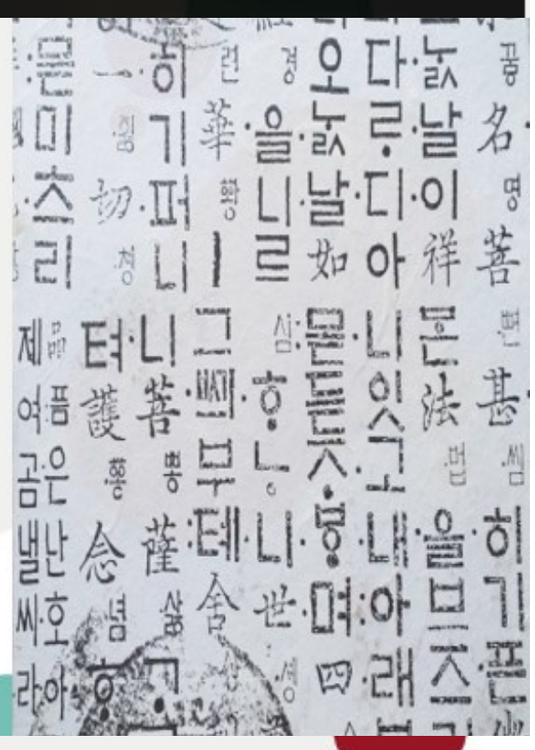
Hunminjeonggeum vs Contemporary Hangul





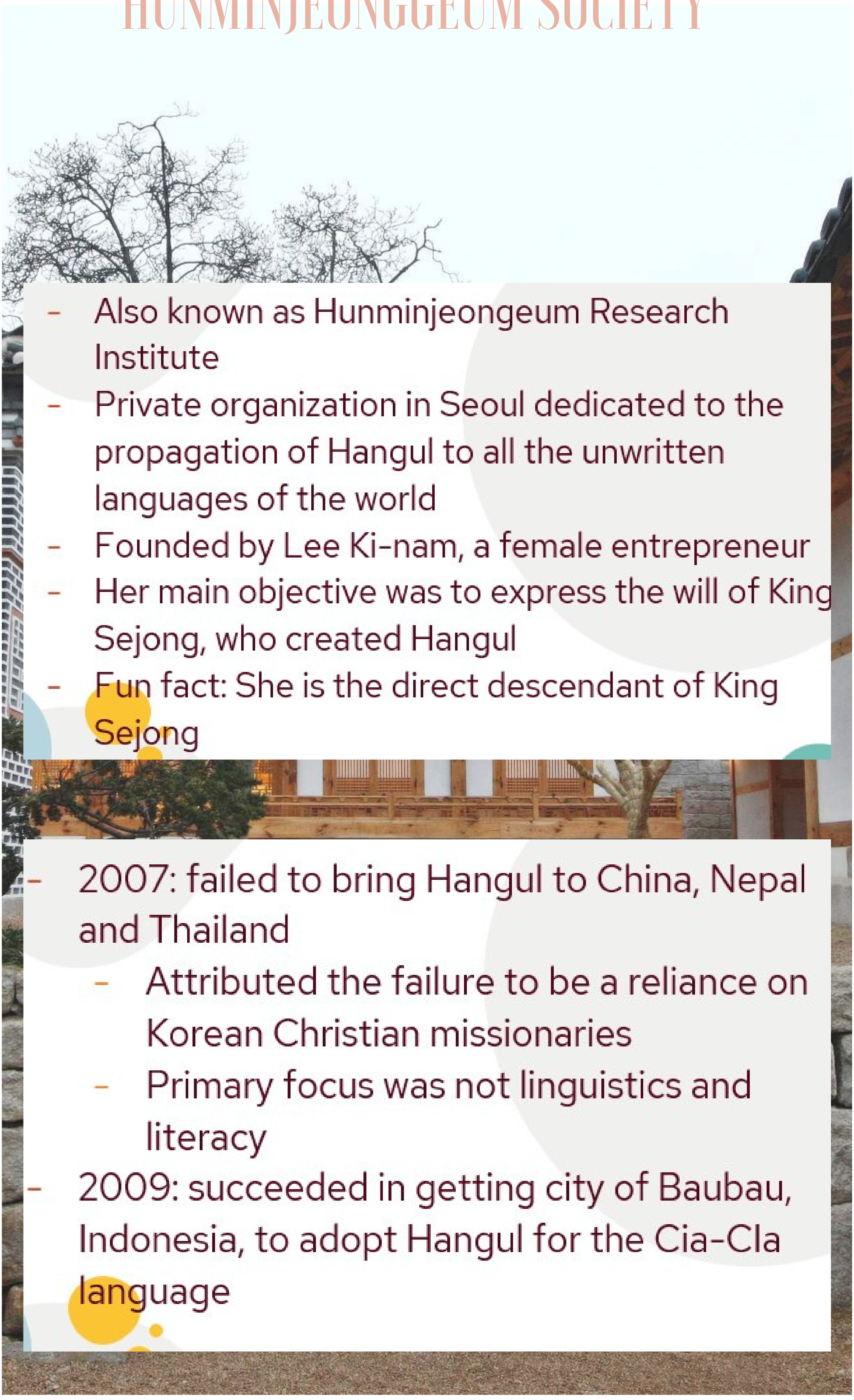
15th Century Hangul

- Written in columns going down, and read from right to left
- Smaller Hangul characters are pronunciations of the above chinese character (한자)
- Tonal language→ indicated by dots on the left of the character
  - No dot : normal tone(평성)
  - One dot : high tone(거성)
  - Two dots: rising tone(상성)
- Triple consonants cluster are gone
- Single dot vowel has been omitted



Original hangeul (Hunminjeonggeum) 1446	ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㆆ ㅎ ㅇ ㅇ ㅿ · ㅡ ㅣ ㅗ ㅏ ㅜ ㅓ ㅛ ㅑ ㅠ ㅕ
Modern hangeul (South Korea)	ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ ㄲ ㄸ ㅃ ㅆ ㅉ ㅇ ㅏ ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ ㅡ ㅣ ㅐ ㅒ ㅔ ㅖ ㅚ ㅟ ㅢ ㅘ ㅝ ㅙ ㅞ

HUNMINJEONGGEUM SOCIETY



- Also known as Hunminjeongeum Research Institute
- Private organization in Seoul dedicated to the propagation of Hangul to all the unwritten languages of the world
- Founded by Lee Ki-nam, a female entrepreneur
- Her main objective was to express the will of King Sejong, who created Hangul
- Fun fact: She is the direct descendant of King Sejong

- 2007: failed to bring Hangul to China, Nepal and Thailand
  - Attributed the failure to be a reliance on Korean Christian missionaries
  - Primary focus was not linguistics and literacy
- 2009: succeeded in getting city of Baubau, Indonesia, to adopt Hangul for the Cia-Cia language

King Sejong Institute

- Brand name of Korean-language institutes by the South Korean government around the world since 2007
- As of June 2018, there were 167 King Sejong Institutes in 55 countries

세종학당
King Sejong Institute

Reasons for setting up King Sejong Institute

- Early Korean Language Teaching
  - Institutes outside Korea target 2nd or 3rd generation descendants of Korean immigrants
  - Korean language learners in SK are mostly foreign students, migrants workers or spouses of Korean
- Rising numbers of Korean learners
  - Korean Wave
  - Increase in the number of foreigners in SK
  - Increase in international corporations and businesses → standardize the names of locations, people and other proper nouns in Hangul
  - Need for up-to-date Korean dictionaries
- Establishment of "Sejonghakdang"
  - Provide integrated and standardised information and service for learning the Korean Language
  - Coordinate and expand the institutes where people can learn/ teach it
  - Developed as the brand commonly used by all Korean language education institutes

CIA-CIA LANGUAGE

Buton, Indonesia

- Island located off the Southeast peninsula of Sulawesi
- 4,408 km^2 in area
- Spoken languages: Wolio, Bahasa Indonesia, **Cia-Cia Language**





Cia-Cia Language

- Also known as Buton or Butonese
- Spoken mainly in Bau-Bau, the city on the southern tip of Buton
- Malayo-Polynesia/Austronesian language
- An oral language
- Cia Cia never had a writing system of their own for records or literature
- Declining in use due to the growing dominance of Bahasa Indonesia

Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd	Ee	Gg	Hh	Ii	Jj	Kk	Ll
a	be	ce	de	e	ge	ha	i	je	ka	el
[a]	[ɓ]	[ʧ]	[ɗ]	[e]	[g]	[h]	[i]	[ʤ]	[k]	[l]
Mm	**Nn**	**Oo**	**Pp**	**Rr**	**Ss**	**Tt**	**Uu**	**Ww**	**’**	
em	en	o	pe	er	es	te	u	we		
[m]	[n]	[o]	[p]	[r~ʁ]	[s]	[t]	[u]	[β]	[ʔ]	

Other letters

bh	dh	gh	ng
[b]	[d]	[ʁ]	[ŋ]

Example of the transcription of Cia-cia language into Latin alphabets

Adoption of Hangul in Baubau

- Hunminjeongeum Society attempted to introduce Hangul as an alphabet system to transcribe Cia-Cia language
- Seoul National University Professor Lee Ho-young led the effort to promote hangul to the Cia-Cia
- Offered to create writing systems and textbooks based on Hangul and to build a $500,000 Korean cultural centre
- They signed a memorandum of understanding to incorporate Hangul into their writing system





Abandonment of the Hangul - Cia-Cia Language program

- Mistranslation in Mayor Amirul Tamim’s statement regarding on the making of Hangul as their official writing system
- Indonesian’s Basic Law stated that all tribal languages should preserved in Roman characters
- Financial problems and several misunderstandings resulted in the closure of the King Sejong Institute

Adoption of Hangul in Baubau

- Two Hangul instructors were sent to teach the Korean alphabet to the Cia-Cia people in July 2009
- They began to use Hangul as Cia-Cia written language and teach the children on the Hangul alphabets which resulted in international media attention
- The Mayor Amirul Tamim consulted the Indonesian government on the possibility to make Hangul as their official language
- However, this project faced difficulties and was abandoned in 2012



MUSYAWARAH KELUARGA BESAR MASYARAKAT ADAT CIA CIA
LAPORO DAN CIA CIA KAISABU
KECAMATAN SORAWOLIO KOTA BAU BAU

BERITA ACARA

PERSETUJUAN PENGGUNAAN AKSARA HANGUL
DALAM BAHASA CIA CIA LAPORO DAN CIA CIA KAISABU
KECAMATAN SORAWOLIO

Pada hari ini, ***Rabu*** tanggal ***Dua Puluh Sembilan*** Bulan ***September*** Tahun ***Dua Ribu Sepuluh*** bertempat di Baruga Kelurahan Bugi, Kecamatan Sorawolio, Kota Bau-Bau. Kami Keluarga Besar Masyarakat Adat Cia Cia Laporo dan Cia Cia Kaisabu Kecamatan Sorawolio bersepakat dan setuju untuk mengadaptasi AKSARA HANGUL untuk digunakan sebagai aksara dalam Bahasa Cia Cia Laporo dan Cia Cia Kaisabu di Kecamatan Sorawolio yang ditanda tangani oleh Tokoh Masyarakat Adat Cia-Cia Sorawolio dengan pertimbangan sebagai berikut:

1. Bahwa Bahasa Cia Cia adalah bahasa lisan dan belum mempunyai aksara tersendiri sehingga dapat mengalami kepunahan sebagaimana bahasa-bahasa lokal lainnya.
2. Bahwa Aksara Hangul dapat mendukung pemahaman dan pelafalan dalam bahasa cia cia
3. Bahwa untuk menjaga keaslian bahasa cia-cia agar terhindar dari pengaruh bahasa lain, maka bahasa cia-cia harus memiliki aksara tersendiri untuk dijadikan bahasa tulisan yang dapat dipelajari secara turun temurun dari generasi kegenerasi.
4. Bahwa dengan adanya aksara dalam bahasa Cia Cia Laporo dan Cia Cia Kaisabu di Kecamatan Sorawolio, maka masyarakatnya dapat membukukan bahasa-bahasa sastra, cerotera rakyat, sejarah dan budayanya.
5. Bahwa dengan di adaptasinya Aksara Hangul dalam bahasa Cia Cia Laporo dan Cia Cia Kaisabu Kecamatan Sorawolio, maka Tata Bahasa Cia Cia akan dapat terpola dan terformalisikan secara baik

Demikian Berita acara ini dibuat dan ditanda tangani bersama pada tanggal, bulan dan tahun sebagaimana tersebut diatas

TOKOH ADAT MASYARAKAT CIA-CIA LAPORO DAN CIA CIA KAISABU
KECAMATAN SORAWOLIO

NAMA	JABATAN	TANDA TANGAN
1. LA WAHE	PARABELA KAISABU	1.
2. LA TOASI	PARABELA KARYA BARU	2.
3. LA AMBEA	PARABELA BUGI	3.
4. LA PIARA	PARABELA GONDA BARU	4.

Cia-Cia Language
Adi sering pali nononto televisi. Amano nopo'ombae ia nanumonto televisi kolie nomolengo.

Hangeul alphabet
아디 세링 빨리 노논또 뗄레ㅸㅣ시. 아마노 노뽀옴바에 이아 나누몬또 뗄레ㅸㅣ시 꼴리에 노몰렝오.

English Translation
Adi watches too much TV. His father advises him not to watch too much TV.

Provinces in Solomon Islands adopt Korean writing system

- Two provinces, Guadalcanal (speak Ghari language) and Malaita (speak Lau language), have decided to use Hangul as their writing system
- 70 different tribes all use different languages which make them very hard to communicate
- Tried to teach their native language in English writing system but failed
- Only 2% of the population speaks English
- 2 Korean-speaking local teachers began to teach in each province



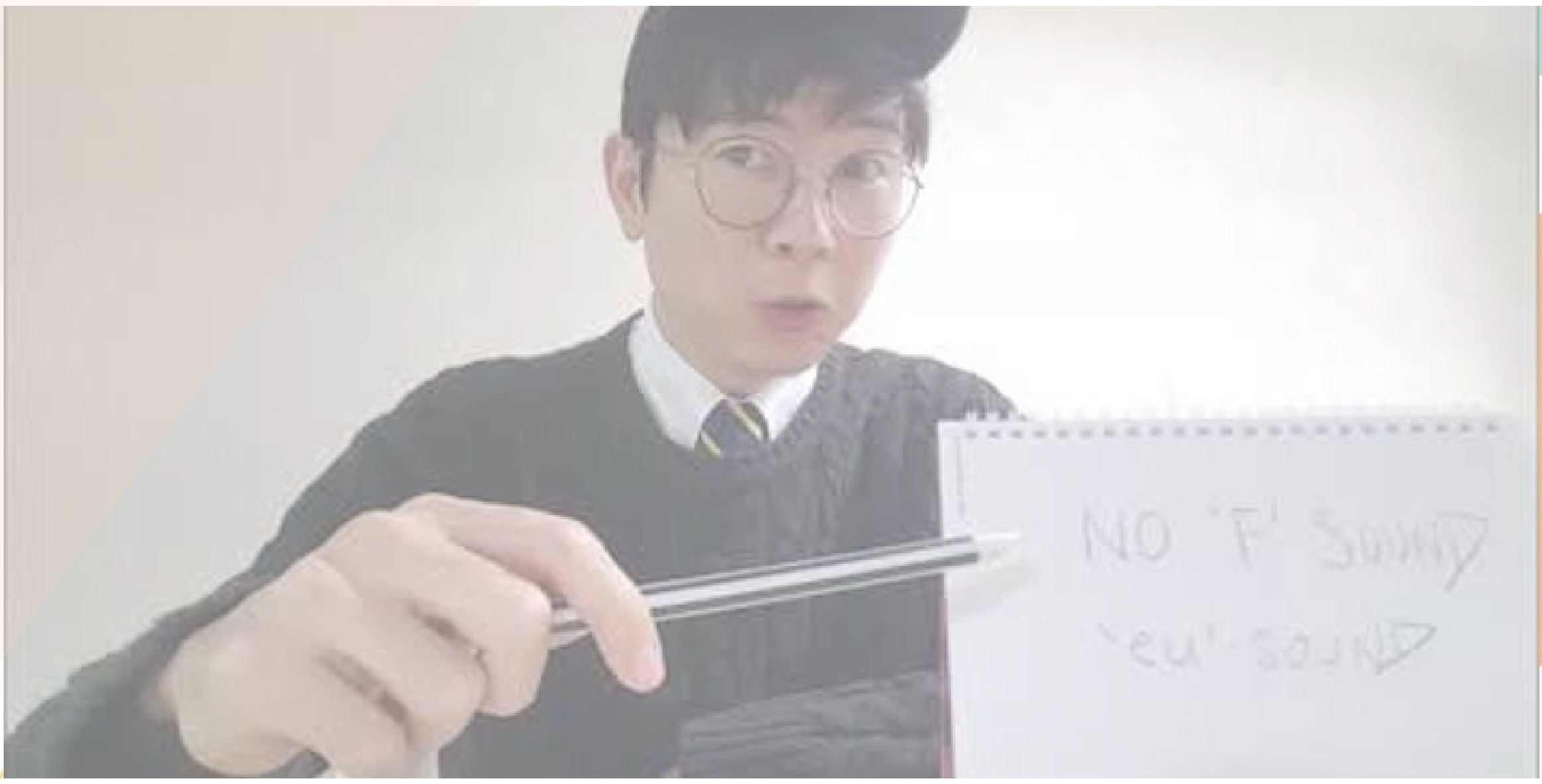
Taiwanese Hangul 대끼깐뿐

- An orthography system for Taiwanese Hokkien
- Promoted and developed by the Taiwanese linguist Hsu Tsao-te in 1987
- Uses modified Hangul alphabets to represent spoken Taiwanese

Matthew 6:1 [edit]

Taiwanese Hangul		Péh-ōe-jī	
Chinese characters	關係行善的教訓 恁著謹慎，毋通為著欲予儂看，故意蹲儂的面前顯示恁的善行； 恁若按呢做，恁就袂當對天父得著報賞。		
Chinese-Hangul mixed writing	關係行善에教訓 린뎧謹慎，음탕為뎧뼣호儂看，故意돠儂에面前顯示린에善行； 린若안네做，린就뻬당뒤天父得뎧報賞。	**Chinese-Latin mixed writing**	關係行善ê教訓 Lín tio̍h謹慎，m̄-thang為tio̍h boeh ho͘儂看，故意toà儂ê面前顯示lín ê善行； Lín若án-ne做，lín就bē-tàng tùi天父得tio̍h報賞。
Hangul	관혜 형센 에 갈훈 린 뎧 긴신 , 음탕 위뎧 뼣 호 랑 쾃 , 고이 돠 랑 에 뻰정 현시 린 에 센형 : 린 나 안네 져 , 린 쥬 뻬당 뒤 텐후 딛뎧 버슝。	**Romanization**	Koan-he Hêng-siān ê Kàu-hùn Lín tio̍h kín-sīn, m̄-thang ūi-tio̍h boeh ho͘ lâng khoà", kò-ì toà lâng ê bīn-chêng hián-sī lín ê siān-hêng. Lín nā án-ne chò, lín chiū bē-tàng tùi Thian-hū tit-tio̍h pò-siú".

Example of the transcription of Taiwanese Hokkien into Hangul characters



Test Question 1

Which of these spoken language did not adopt to Hangul as their written language?

a. Ghari language
b. Lau language
c. Chinese language
d. Cia cia language

Answer: C

Test Question 2

What does the three primary vowels represents?

A. Fire, water and earth
B. Earth, sky and mankind
C. North, south and east
D. One, two and three

Answer: B

Test Question 3

Who is credited as the inventor of Hangul?

A. King Jungjong
B. King Sejong
C. King Yeonsangun
D. King Seojoon

Answer: B


EXIT
Contents:
1. History of Hangul
2. Introduction to Hangul
3. Globalisation of Hangul
a. Contemporary Hangul
b. Cia-cia language
c. Solomon Islands
d. Taiwanese Hangul


EXIT
- Document describing an enti
and native script for the Kore
Language
- Created so that the common
illiterate in Hanja could accur
easily read and write the Kor
language



EDUCATION IN KOREA

Zhang Chang (Sally)| Queenton Tan | Elijah Goh | Long Wen Min

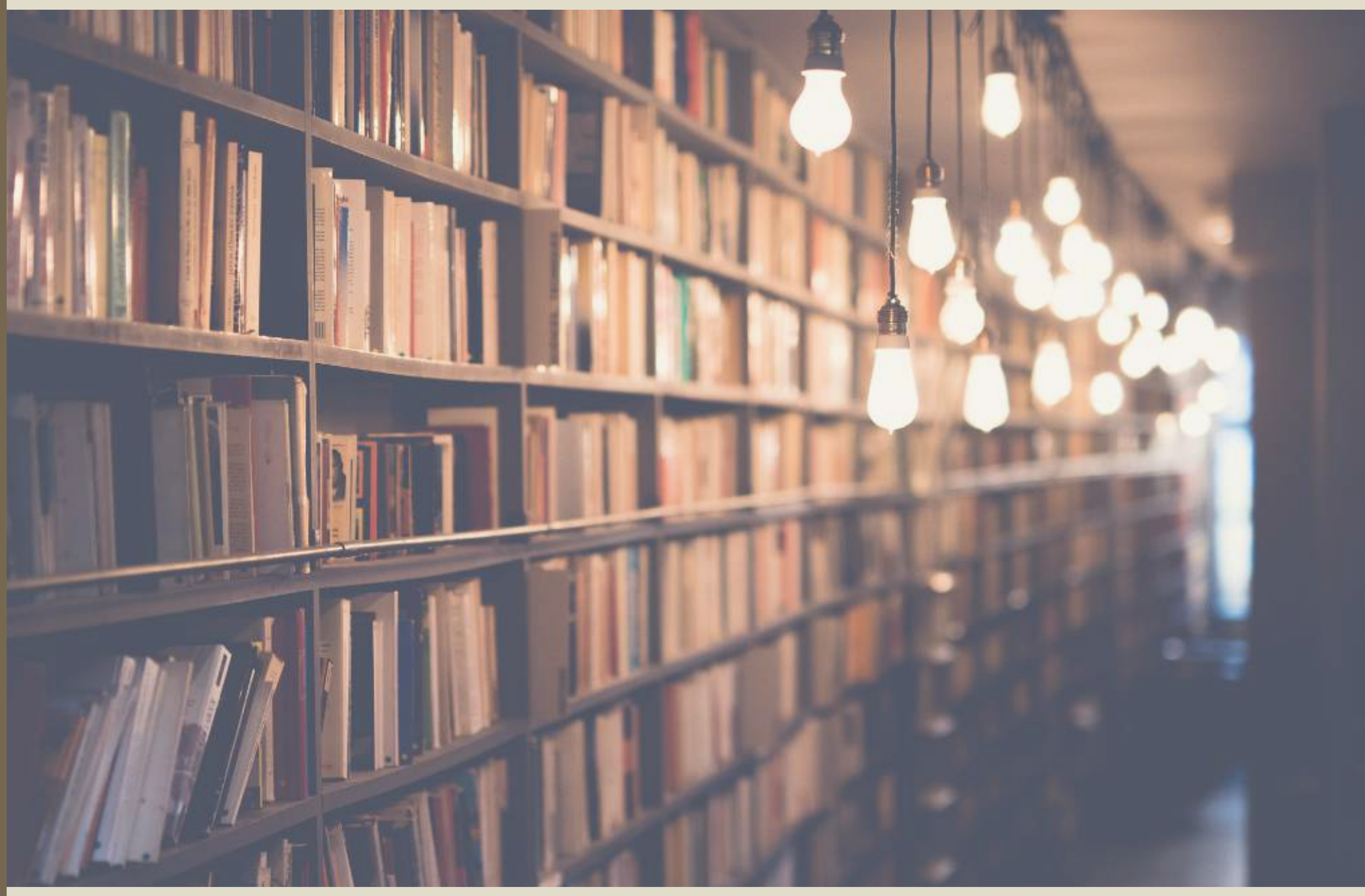


Table of Contents

01. Introduction

02. History of Kor. Education

03. Life of a Kor. Student

04. Suicide Rates amongst students

05. Global Comparison

06. Conclusion

01

Introduction



South Korea’s Education

One of the world's most educated workforces

- Literacy rate of 97.9%
- Ranked 4 in the world (OECD)
- Students in Korea scored higher than the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science



Previous US President Barack Obama:

"In South Korea, teachers are known as nation builders. I think it's time we treated our teachers with the same level of respect right here in the United States of America"

“That calendar might have once made sense, but today, it puts us at a competitive disadvantage. Our children spend over a month less in school than children in South Korea. That is no way to prepare them for a 21st-century economy.”

Is South Korea’s education system as perfect as what the rest of the world believe?



02 History of Korean Education



Timeline of Education System



The Three Kingdom



- Each of three kingdoms have each established their own system of education.
- Heavily influenced by Confucianism instead of Buddhism.
- This was because Confucianism is more suited to cultivate government officials due to the cardinal Confucian tenet "to build the mind and govern the nation
- Goguryero : First Korea education institution: Taixue (태학; 太学), Daehak
- Humanities (Confucian texts, history books, and reference books for Chinese language)
- Classic of Filial Piety and the Analects

Joseon Dynasty

Joseon Dynasty

- Neo Confucianism as the ruling ideology and suppress Buddhism
- Education focuses on teaching of confucianism and also a way of life
- King Sejong introduce Hangul, a new writing system
- Literary rates skyrocketed

Education Institution (Mainly for the rich aristotle)

- Seodang: Primary education
- Sahak : secondary education
- Seonggyungwan: higher education : Train to be officials
- Joghak: Royal Family School



Joseon Dynasty: 1876-1910



1876: Korea opened its port to the world

- Traditional education of Confucianism was abolished
- Replaced by modern education such as traditional liberal education and curriculums centered on Western education.

Gabo Reform (1894-1896) King Gojong

- Abolish the social class status system and open up colleges to talented individual regardless of status
- Ewha Girls' School - First modern educational institution for woman
- Slowly starting to resemble present day educations but...

Japanese Colonization - 1910 to 1945

- Introduction of Joseon Education Decree and Private School Regulation - 1911
- Purpose of obliterating all Korean cultural and spiritual independence to keep Koreans colonized forever
- Japanese culture, history and geographical instead of Korean
- Help student for preparation of jobs as low-level workers and not higher education
- Expanded number of vocational schools



1st Republic



Government of Syngman Rhee

- Restore and reform the education system
- 80% of Korean citizens not able to write in Korean due the Japanese Colonial education policies.

6-3-3-4 single-track ladder system:

- elementary schools (six years), middle schools (three years), high schools (three years), and universities (four years).
- Focus on nationalistic spirit and the state-first ideology to attain ideological unification
- Main principle: equal opportunity for education and free and compulsory education at elementary schools.

Military Regime: 3rd Republic

Government of Park Chung Hee (1961-1979)

- Reform education policies to help with the industrialization and provide student with opportunities for education



Middle School Equalization Policy

- Abolish middle school entrance exam and standardize the curriculum for all middle school
- To correct the inequalities and increase rate of enrollment
- Rose from less than 50% to 96% by 1976

Governing higher education

- Set the enrollment limit for university and implement standardized preliminary entrance examination
- To maintain quality and standards

Overall, successful but lead to problem such as lack of teachers and growing competition for a placement in university.

4th and 5th Republic



Government of Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan

- To resolve overcompetition and introducing more policies to provide more education opportunities

High School Equalization Policy in 1974

- Reduce the gap between high school by standardising the curriculum
- Due to growing competition for entering top-class high schools
- Helped enhance the educational standards among high school.

Chun Doo Hwan's reform

- 7.30 measure: banned any private tutoring
- Growing increasing income gap between students
- Middle school education compulsory - 1984

6th Republic: Democracy and Globalisation

Kim Young Sam

- New Education System (1995)
- Loosen control and give school more autonomy and accountability
- Kim administration drastically relaxed the university enrollment limit
- Promote the creative and critical thinking by applying knowledge learnt instead of traditional memorisation



Kim Dae Jung

- Rapid globalisation
- Information sector was highlighted as a core industry
- Apply information and communication technologies to education
- Development of IT and incorporate IT skills and course into its curriculum

Present day: 21st Century

Six core competencies in the 2015 curriculum revision

Category	Contents
Competency for self-management	Competency for self-directed living with a sense of self-identity and confidence, as well as the basic skills and qualifications needed for the development of life and career
Competency for knowledge and information	Competency for dealing with and utilizing diverse areas of knowledge and information in order to rationally solve the problems
Competency for creative thought	Competency for creating new values through the inter-disciplinary use of knowledge, information, and experi-ences in diverse professional fields, based on a vast amount of basic knowledge
Competency for aesthetic-emotionality	Competency for finding the meaning and the value of life based on empathic understanding of people and cultural sensitivity
Competency for communication	Competency for expressing thoughts and sentiments, and listening to others' opinions in various situations
Competency for community consciousness	Competency for participating in the activities for the development of a community with a sense of value and an attitude required for the members of regional, national, and global communities

- Creative Leader Cultivation System
- Reform Education System in 2009 and 2015
- Introduce Six Core Competencies
- Develop students to become Leaders
- Competencies: Creativity, communication, self management, knowledge, emotional intelligence, community conscious

03
Life of a Korean Student

Academic progression

As a student in South Korea, You will undergo:

- Six years of elementary school
- Three years of middle school
- Three years of high school
  - Vocational Education
  - College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) at the end of high school
- Further years in higher education
  - Vocational colleges
  - Poly-tech universities
  - Universities of technology and education
  - Poly-tech colleges
  - Corporate universities
- School vacations are from July to August and the other from December to February

→ Elementary school and Middle school is compulsory

Cultural View on Education



*Image from https://bangkok.unesco.org/

- One of the fundamental cornerstones of South Korean life
- Regarded as a high priority for South Korean families
  - Success in education is necessary for improving one's socioeconomic position
  - Those who graduate from a top university are highly regarded and sought after for government positions and Korean conglomerate businesses(Chaebols)
- Many parents send their children to Hagwon to help them succeed academically

Hagwon(Cram Schools)



*Image from https://cnbc.com/

- Hagwon is the korean word used to describe private schools or tuition
- More than 83 percent of 5-year-olds and 36 percent of 2-year-olds in South Korea receive private education.
  - For 5-year-olds, the average is 5.2 times a week and 50 minutes per session.
  - For 2-year-olds, the average is 2.6 times a week and 47.6 minutes per session.
- After-school sessions last as long as four hours.
- Students attending Hagwon after school often return home late at night (10pm or later)

College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT)



*Image from https://cnn.com/

- Standardised test for students who have completed high school.
- Held anually on the third Thursday of November
- Results will determine which universities a student can enter.
- During the day of CSAT, stock market openings are delayed by an hour, public transport services are ramped up and police support is provided to ensure that students for CSAT arrive on time.
- Planes are also grounded so as not to distract students during the exam.
- Notorious for being difficult

CSAT English Question

The following question appeared on 2010 CSAT, and had a correct-response rate of 9.77 percent. The paragraph is excerpted from John Leofric Stocks' "The Limits of Purpose":

> So far as you are wholly concentrated on bringing about a certain result, clearly, the quicker and easier it is brought about the better. Your resolve to secure a sufficiency of food for yourself and your family will induce you to spend weary days in tilling the ground and tending livestock; but if Nature provided food and meat in abundance ready for the table, you would thank Nature for sparing you much labor and consider yourself so much the better off. An executed purpose, in short, is a transaction in which the time and energy spent on the execution are balanced against the resulting assets, and the ideal case is one in which_____. Purpose, then, justifies the efforts it exacts only conditionally, by their fruits.

1. demand exceeds supply, resulting in greater returns
2. life becomes fruitful with our endless pursuit of dreams
3. the time and energy are limitless and assets are abundant
4. Nature does not reward those who do not exert efforts
5. the former approximates to zero and the latter to infinity

*Screenshot of https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/College_Scholastic_Ability_Test

Income Inequality



image from: https://www.flaticon.com/authors/roundicons

- High amount of money spent on private education.
- Quality of education for a child will vary depending on how much a family is willing to spend for good hagwon
- Research done by Pennsylvania State University in May 2010 shows income is having a greater effect on academic success compared to before in South Korea.
- Paradoxical state where education serves to further income inequality
  - Rich will have better education and continue to do well while the poor struggle to keep up
- Contributes to declining birth rates as cost of parenthood increases
- Fault of the government or the culture, or both?

Achievements of Education System

Highly skilled workforce promoted country's development



PISA Ranking:

7th in Reading, and Maths
11th for Science



70% have tertiary degree

vs 45% on average across OECD countries



Pitfalls of Education System

Stressful Educational Environment

- Fear of disappointing parents
- Lack of leisure time
- Impact on Health: Sleep deprivation
- **Relatively high suicide rates**



Inadequate Curriculum?

- Youth unemployment rate has been **increasing**.
- Lack of proper development for creativity

Pitfalls of Education System

Huge Cost of Investment and Budget

- 2017: Korea invested a total of USD 11,981 per student on primary to tertiary institutions compared to USD 11,231 on average across OECD countries.
- This represents **5% of GDP**, compared to 4.9% on average across OECD countries.

Social Impact:

Social prejudice faced by those without a college degree

04
Negative Consequences: Suicide Rates amongst students

Statistics on suicide rates

- 23.0 out of 100,000 (OECD, 2017)
  - Highest amongst all OECD countries
- Yearly social losses: $5.9118 Billion USD (Business Korea, 2015)



Suicide remains leading cause of death for S. Korean teens, youths

By Yonhap

Published : Apr 27, 2020 - 13:07 Updated : Apr 27, 2020 - 13:12

Pressure Placed on Typical Korean Student

- Filial Piety
- Strain on the student from academic pressure
  - Stress
  - Signs of Depression and ideation of suicide

Changes to be made?

- Better infrastructure for mental health support
- Social support systems for suicide prevention
- Encourage people to seek for treatment

중앙자살예방센터
Korea Suicide Prevention Center



05 GLOBAL COMPARISON: SINGAPORE

A Local Case Study



My Sister

- Born 2004
- Went through PSLE, completed the IP and is now in an affiliated JC

Me

- Born 2000
- Went through PSLE, ‘O’ Levels, ‘A’ Levels, Came to Uni/WKWSCI

The Streaming Device

Utilises regular examinations, class tests and group projects that amount to a student’s final grades at the end of the school year.



Singapore's Education System

Primary School (Age 6-12)



Gifted Education Programme (GEP)

- Sieves out intellectually gifted students
- Provides out-of-school learning experiences, for example, math trails and visits to parks and museums.
- Provides out-of-school extensions, for example, mentorship attachments in collaboration with tertiary institutions.

The Story of Us: Primary School

My Sister

- Ranked 2nd in her P2 final exams, placing her in the top class in P3
- Enrolled in the GEP and passed the first test, but failed the second
- Entered the STEP Programme that allowed them opportunities to travel overseas to Thailand and Japan for cultural exchange
  - Only SELECTED students from the top class was part of the STEP programme

Me

- I don't even know what rank I was but it was definitely a double digit
- Didn't even get short-listed for GEP
- What is STEP?

The Story of Us: PSLE

My Sister

- PSLE: Score 269 (/300) + 2 from Higher Mother Tongue = 271 Net
- Enrolled in CHIJ St. Nic's Girls' School's IP

Me

- PSLE: Same as my sister!
- But like minus 30 points
- I'll do the math for you, it's 239
- Enrolled in Yishun Town Secondary School, at the time known as the best neighbourhood school in the area.

Singapore's Education System

Secondary School (Age 13-16): Post PSLE

The Integrated-Programme:
The IP is a 6-year course leading to GCE A-Level examination or International Baccalaureate Diploma or NUS High School Diploma. Students in the IP do not need to take the GCE O-Level examination at Secondary 4.

The 'O' Level Route:
Express: Students in this track would need to sit for the 'O' Levels at the end of 4 years → JC/Polytechnic
Normal Academic: Students in this track would sit for the 'N' Levels at the end of 4 years OR sit for the 'O' Levels if they stay for 5 years → JC/Poly/ITE
Normal Technical: Students in this track would sit for the 'N' Levels at the end of 4 years → ITE

The Story of Us: Secondary School

My Sister

- Enrolled in CHIJ St. Nic's Girls' School's IP
- Enrolled in the Bicultural Studies Programme (BSP)
  - Went to China for 1 month
  - Went to Japan for 1 week
  - Had conferences with affiliated schools (Catholic High, Singapore Chinese Girls' School)
  - Should've gone to the USA for 2 weeks

Me

- Enrolled in Yishun Town Secondary School (Express)
- Enrolled in 0 programmes, but in like 4 different leadership ones
  - Went to Malaysia (to hike)
  - Went to Hong Kong (to hike)
  - Went to China (to hike)
- 'O' Levels: Thank God for BTS

The Story of Us: Junior College

My Sister

- CHIJ St. Nic's Girls' School's IP led her to enrol in an affiliated JC without needing to take 'A' Levels
- Enrolled in the Humanities Scholarship Programme (HSP)
  - Annual Overseas Enrichment Programme
  - Biennial Symposium
  - Yeah, I also don't know what that means honestly

Me

- Anderson Junior College
- Was NOT an academically outstanding student → Got into MORE leadership stuff instead AGAIN
- 'A' Levels: Thank God for NCT

Omissions

I had a ton of tuition, and my sister too (though not as much)

So what about those that couldn't afford it?

Common Problems

S. Korea

- Overzealousness and Passion for education → Increased stress and investment into additional aid → Large difference between different classes of people

Singapore

- Competitiveness for apparent difference in opportunities → Increased investment into additional aid → Large difference between different classes of people

Food For Thought: Discussion Question

What are some recommendations for the S. Korean and Singaporean Government to help the less-fortunate students?

Questions

1. Name two out of six core competency introduced during 2015 education reform.

Answer:

1. Competency for self-management
2. Competency for knowledge and information
3. Competency for creative thought
4. Competency for aesthetic-emotionally
5. Competency for communication
6. Competency for community consciousness

Questions

2. What are the negative effects associated with the prevalence of Hagwon?

Answer:

1. Worsening of income Inequality
2. Declining birth rates due to increased financial burden
3. Stress to students
4. Lack of social life for students

Questions

3. What is the main reason for Koreans to be so invested in pursuing education?

Answer:

a. Competitiveness
b. Passion
c. Obligation
d. All of the above


EDUCATION
IN KOREA
Zhang Chang (Sally)| Queenton
Tan | Elijah Goh | Long Wen Min
EXIT


EXIT
SAFE LEARNING


YOUNG PEOPLE PROBLEMS
SPECIAL EDITION: KOREAN YOUTH'S GRIEVANCES IN THE 21ST CENTURY
DONE BY: NEO JING MIAN (AMELIA), SAMANTHA LIM SI EN, HANISAH BTE RASHID, LEE WEN LING PATRICIA

NEWS INDEX

01 KOREA'S YOUNG: WHY SO ANGST?

02 INEQUALITY: A MERITOCRATIC NIGHTMARE

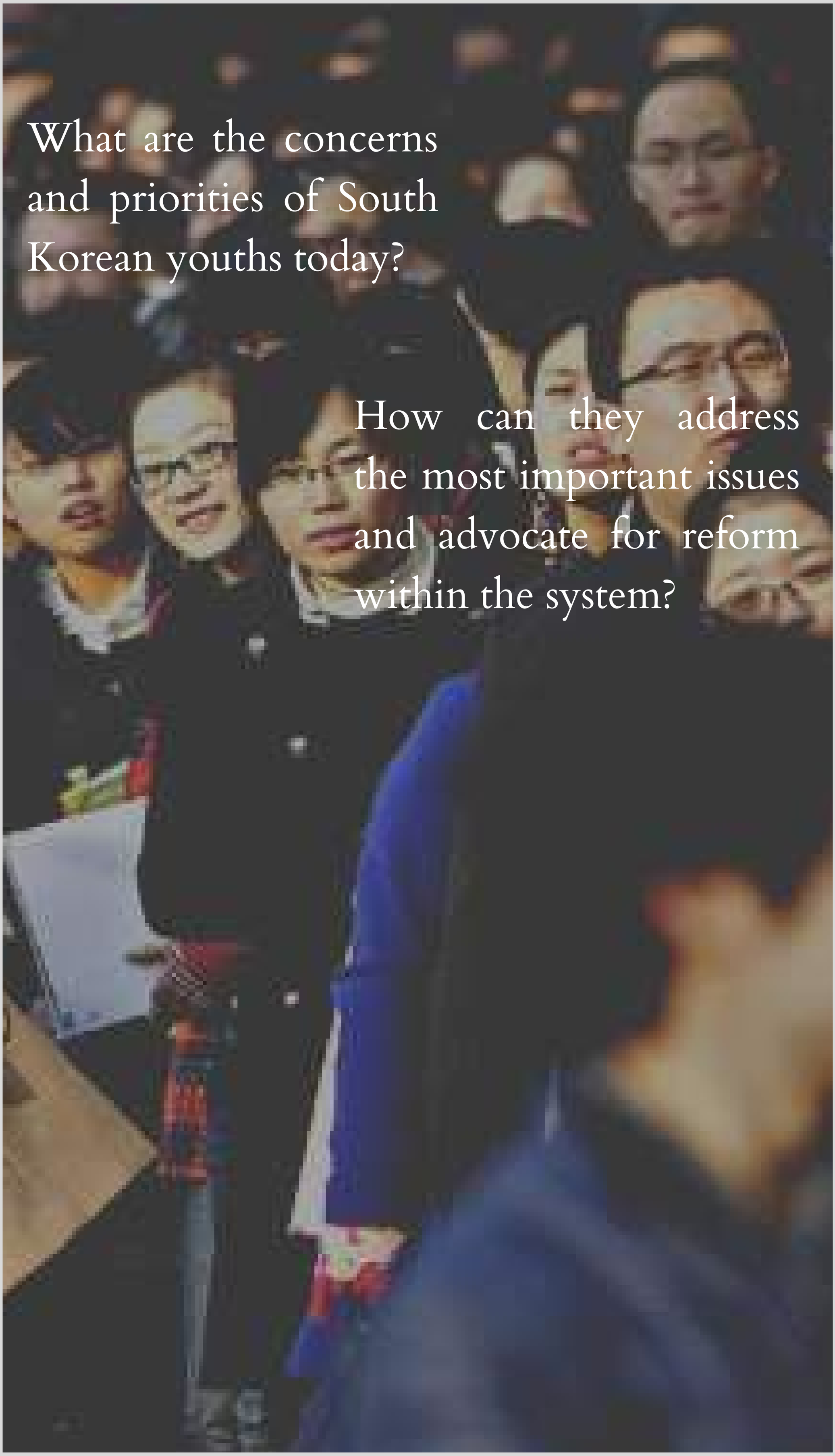
03 GAPJIL AT WORK

04 SCHOOL VIOLENCE & CULTURE

05 RECOMMENDATIONS

06 3 QUESTIONS




What are the concerns and priorities of South Korean youths today?
How can they address the most important issues and advocate for reform within the system?

COMMENTARY SPOTLIGHT : YOUNG PEOPLE

KOREAN YOUTHS

Born in the 'compressed modernity' era

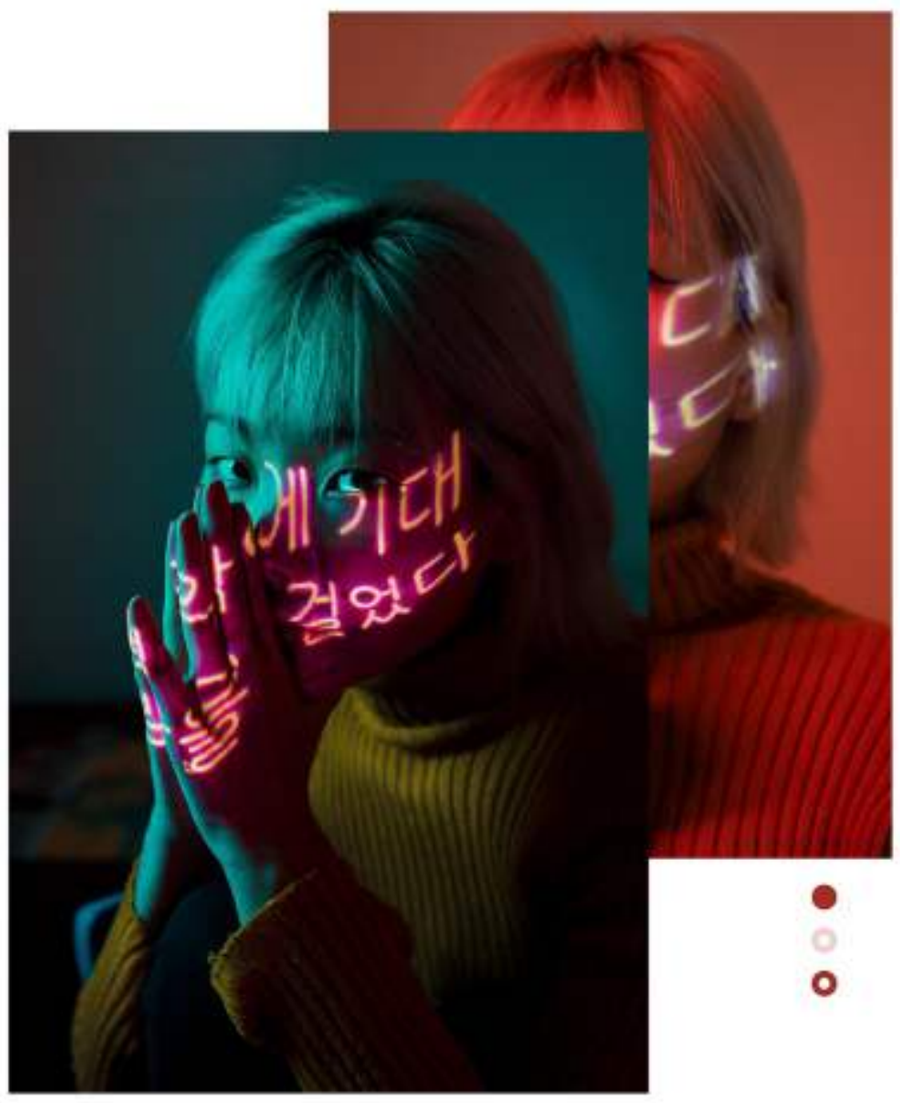
- Increasingly skeptical and cynical towards the government
- Increased level of political awareness, and difference in values

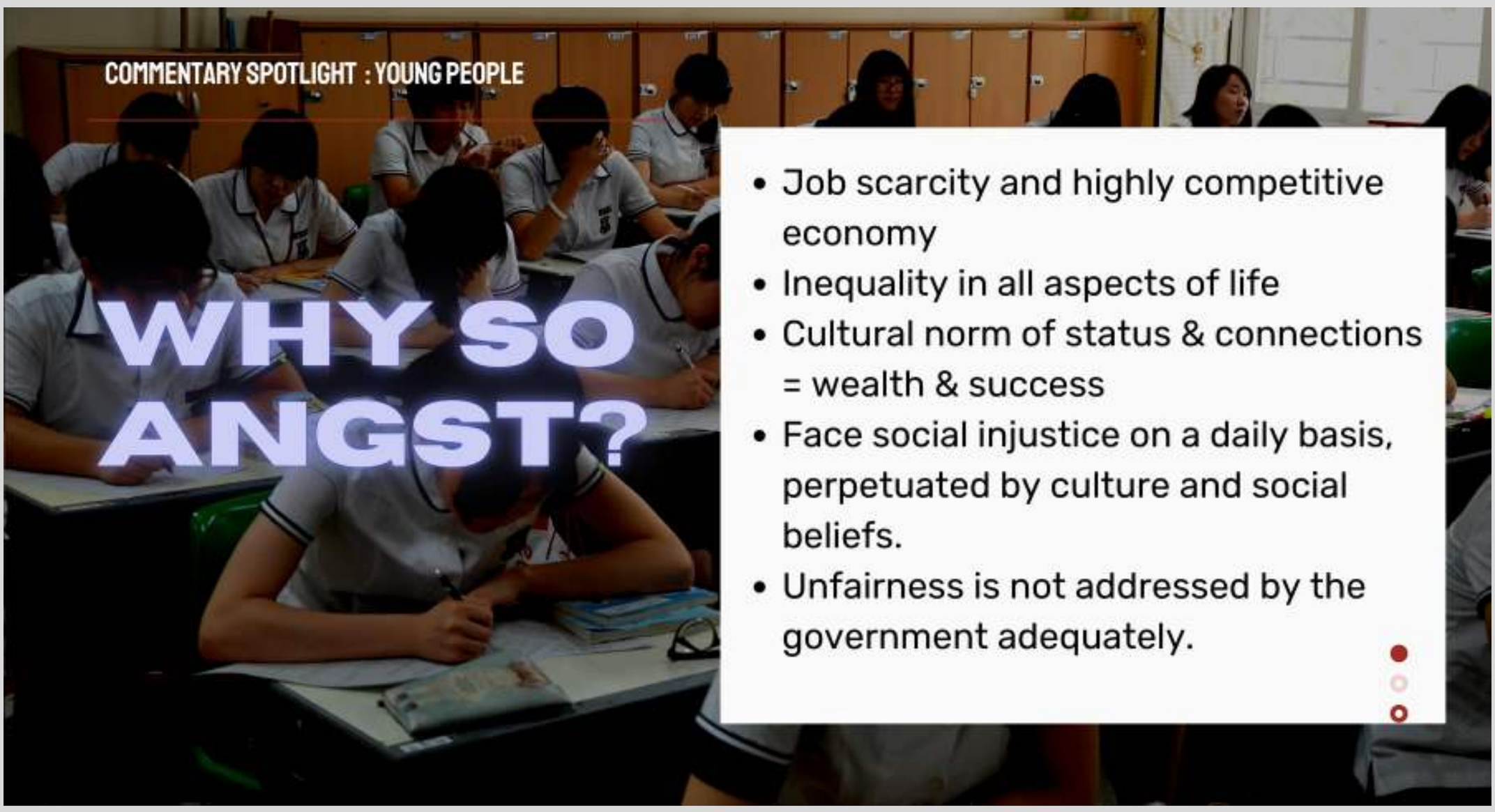


COMMENTARY SPOTLIGHT : YOUNG PEOPLE

KOREAN YOUTHS

- Highly intolerant of social injustice, exploitation and manipulation.
- Believe that the government is inadequate in addressing societal issues/crises.
- Slowly pushing for systemic reform.





- Job scarcity and highly competitive economy
- Inequality in all aspects of life
- Cultural norm of status & connections = wealth & success
- Face social injustice on a daily basis, perpetuated by culture and social beliefs.
- Unfairness is not addressed by the government adequately.


INEQUALITY: A
MERITOCRATIC
NIGHTMARE


THE REALITY
5.5X INCOME GAP
BETWEEN THE RICH AND
POOR
43.3% OF SOUTH KOREA'S
INCOME IS HELD BY THE TOP
10% OF THE POPULATION.
ONLY 23.1% OF SOUTH KOREANS BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO CLIMB THE
SOCIAL LADDER


FIRST ISSUE
ASIAN BOSS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKhuhtTeFE


THE REALITY
South Korea's 'Jobs President' Moon Jae-in faces policy rollback over employment uproar
MANY YOUTHS FEEL BETRAYED BY PRESIDENT MOON JAE IN, WHO PROMISED TO CREATE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, FAIR PROCESSES, AND RIGHTEOUS RESULTS , BUT HAS FAILED TO DELIVER

FIRST ISSUE: REASONS

CULTURAL NORMS

HIGH COMPETITION

PERCEPTION OF SYSTEMIC UNFAIRNESS AND ELITE BIAS

HIGH COST OF LIVING

HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

WIDENING INCOME GAP

FIRST ISSUE

'HELL JOSEON'

A satirical term coined by Korean youths publicly criticising the current socio-economic situation, uneven playing field, lack of social protection, and high levels of inequality gridlock



'HELL JOSEON'

Today's inequality is compared to the Joseon Dynasty, where the imposed feudal system determined who had access to advantages, and who did not.

FIRST ISSUE

GEUMSUJEO (금수저) VS HEUKSSUJEO (흙수저)

"golden spoon"

A term used to describe the rich and elite in Korea who use their connections, status and wealth to succeed in life

gold (금), silver (은), bronze (동) and soil/dirt (흙)

"dirt spoon"

A term describing the "have nots" - people who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and are discriminated against in terms of opportunities

Has become popular in recent years & is reflective of the bitter hopelessness among the have-nots

FIRST ISSUE : Ranking the different classes in Korea



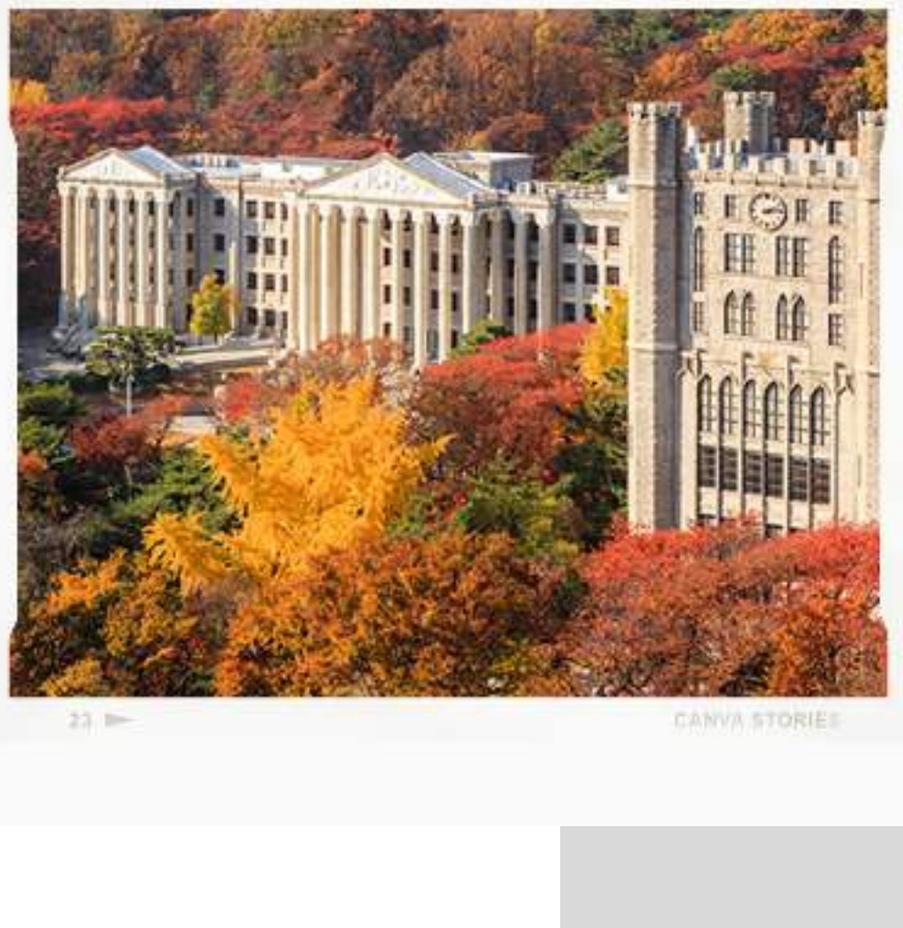
FIRST ISSUE

HAKBEOL

A **social construct of educational prestige**..

Social rankings are based on one's educational success,

Perpetuating a cycle of elitism as only the elites have access to elite education



CHALLENGING THE SOCIETAL RHEOTORIC

ONE SHOULD RELY ON YOUR OWN EFFORTS & ACHIEVEMENTS INSTEAD OF CONNECTIONS & STATUS

SO, WHAT IS THE IDEAL?

A MERITOCRATIC SOCIETY GUARANTEEING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND, STATUS, OR WEALTH



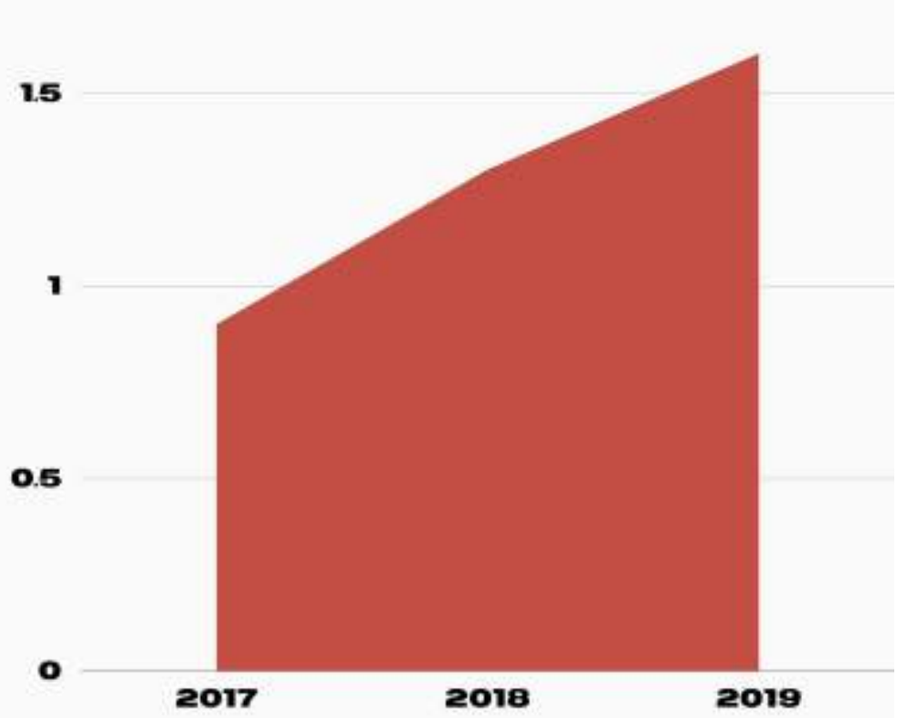
SECOND ISSUE

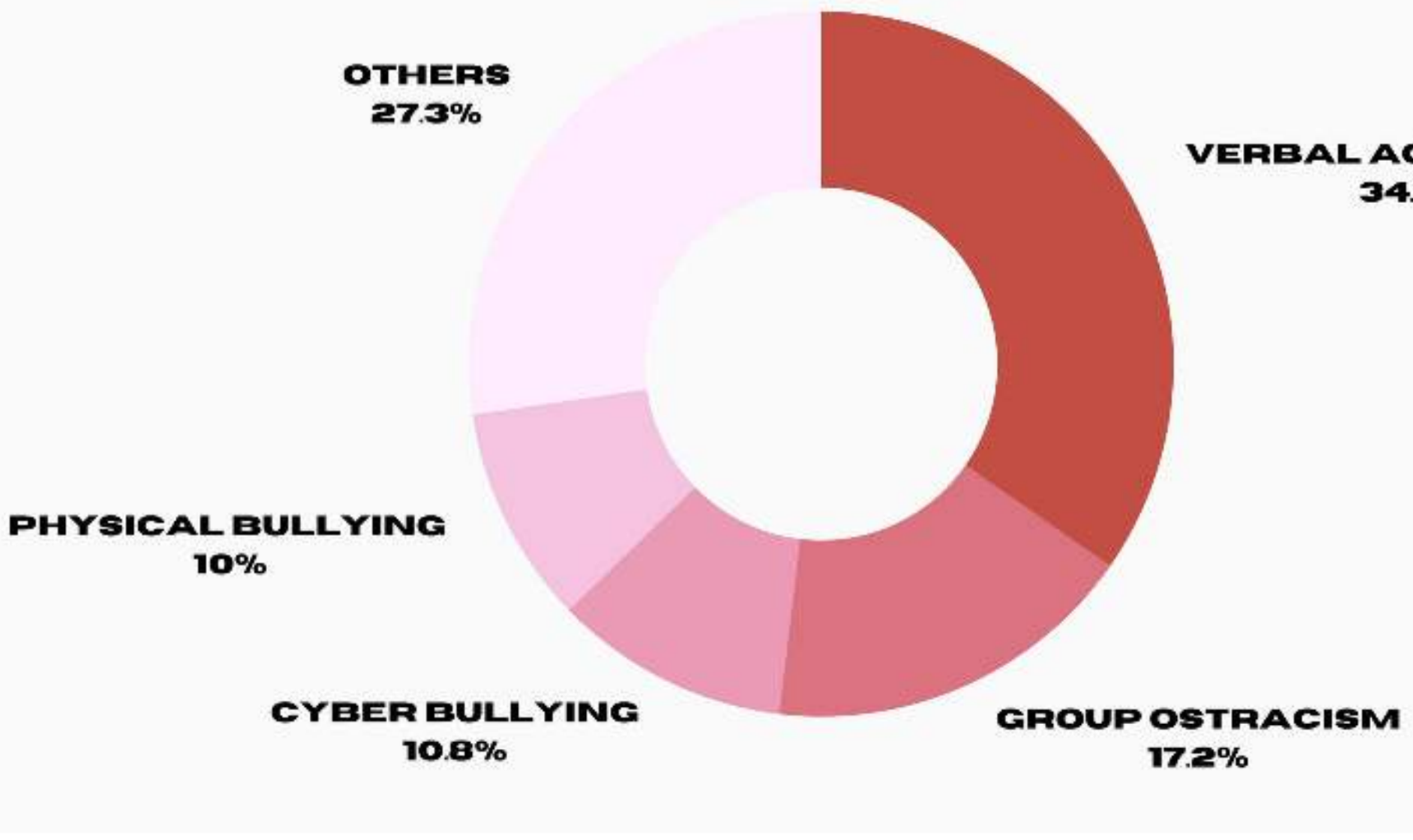
2

SCHOOL VIOLENCE

School violence has risen over the years from 0.9% in 2017 to **1.6% in 2019.**

At least **1 in 100** students from elementary, middle and high schools in Korea have witnessed or suffered from a form of school bullying in the past two semesters.





왕따

WANGTTA

Known as a type of silent bullying

Refers to exclusion of an individual from a group

Being labelled as such causes complete isolation from peers



일진

IL-JIN

Used to be what they called gangsters in Korea but is now used to refer to bad kids in schools, otherwise known as the **school bully**.



학폭

HAGPOG

Wangtta falls under violence (학폭) committed in schools that can be defined as “anything from name-calling, teasing, sexual taunts, frequent fighting...to the extremes of individual persecution and racial attacks.”

Bullying is a subcategory to this, that refers to a more directed abuse of one particular victim.



LACK OF SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL FACULTY

LACK OF SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL FACULTY (TEACHERS AND HEAD STAFF) IN REIGNING IN BULLYING IN CLASSROOMS.



MANY TIMES, DESPITE PREVIOUS SUICIDE CASES DUE TO BULLYING, SCHOOLS IGNORE CONCERNS RAISED BY STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN ORDER TO "SAVE FACE" AND PROTECT THE SCHOOL'S REPUTATION.

INADEQUACY OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES

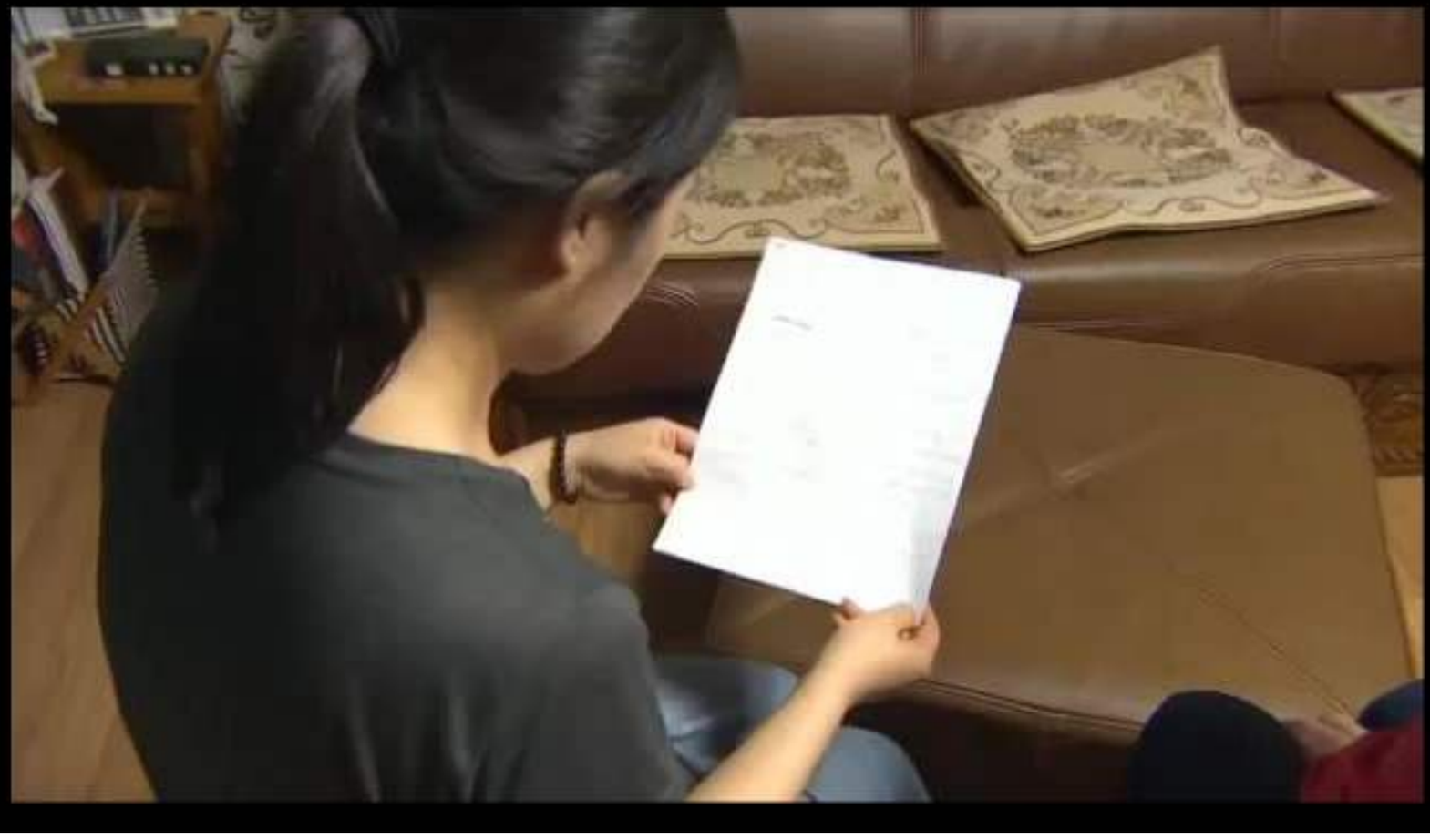
FOR THIS, WE CAN LOOK TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLOSED-CIRCUIT CAMERAS AND SECURITY PERSONNEL IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC OUTCRY.

THE MEASURES DID LITTLE TO ELEVATE THE PROBLEM.

A VICTIM HAD STATED IN HIS SUICIDE NOTE THAT HE WAS BEATEN IN BLIND SPOTS, OUT OF REACH OF SECURITY CAMERAS.

ADDITIONALLY, IT WAS FOUND THAT 93% OF SECURITY CAM FOOTAGE ARE OF LOW RESOLUTION AND NOT USEFUL IN IDENTIFYING BULLIES

INADEQUACY OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES



HIGHER RISK OF SUICIDE IDEATION OR SUICIDE BEHAVIOUR

IS IT ENOUGH?



THIRD ISSUE

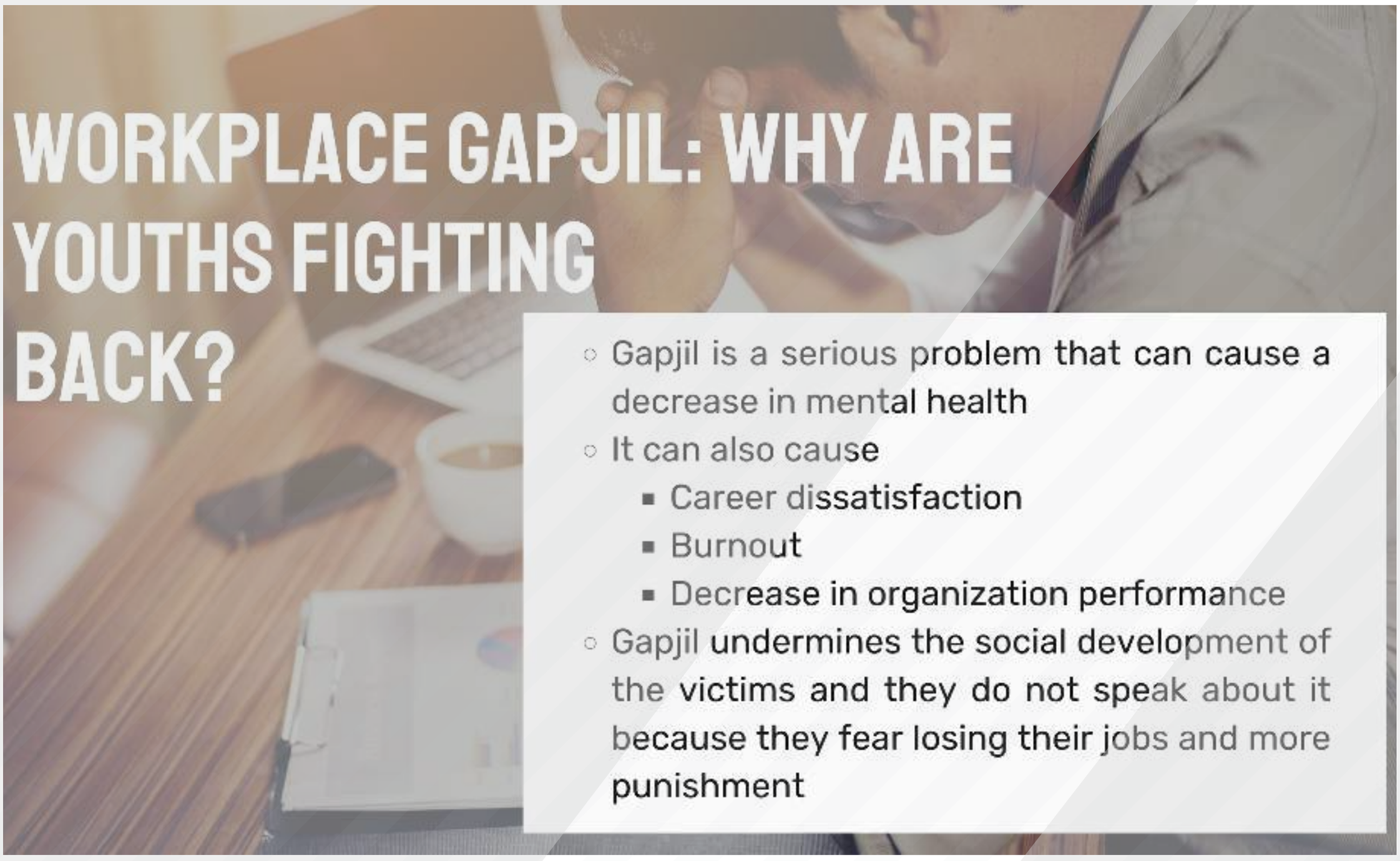
WORKPLACE GAPJIL



- Gapjil is a social phenomenon that is deeply rooted in the hierarchical society in South Korea
- It is used to maintain the stark power imbalance between a supervisor and an employee in a workplace environment
- There are many types of Gapjil but can be summarized into:
  - Social undermining
  - Abusive supervision behaviors



https://youtu.be/2JpX6oDCvHU (1.40-2.15)


WORKPLACE GAPJIL: WHY ARE YOUTHS FIGHTING BACK?
Gapjil is a serious problem that can cause a decrease in mental health
It can also cause
Career dissatisfaction
Burnout
Decrease in organization performance
Gapjil undermines the social development of the victims and they do not speak about it because they fear losing their jobs and more punishment

WORKPLACE GAPJIL: WHY ARE YOUTHS FIGHTING BACK?
Youths are growing dissatisfied and are pushing for change in workplace power dynamics
They have realized that suffering is no longer a prerequisite for success
They now want a society that values individual merit and satisfaction in life beyond monetary success

CASE STUDY

WORKPLACE GAPJIL: A KOREAN AIR CASE STUDY

LEE MYUNG HEE, wife of Korean Air Chairman



Threw a metal shear at the gardener for not removing weeds properly and kicked the ladder that the employee was using causing the employee to fall from a height of 3M, hurting his knee

Threw a 60cm vase at staff twice to make sure it broke and verbally abused them

Caught on camera while screaming at her employees and physically abusing them by pulling and pushing them around

WORKPLACE GAPJIL: A KOREAN AIR CASE STUDY

HEATHER CHO, daughter of Korean Air Chairman



- Demanded a Korean Air plane to return to its gate at NY JFK airport to demand the removal of a flight attendant
- The flight attendant served her macadamia nuts in a bag and not in a porcelain bowl as they were preparing for take-off
- Found guilty for violating aviation laws and faced a civil suit for assault and insult against the employee

WORKPLACE GAPJIL: A KOREAN AIR CASE STUDY

EMILY CHO, daughter of Korean Air Chairman

Insulted and threw water at an advertising executive when she was unhappy with his answers to her questions

Inflamed public anger towards gapjil in the workplace



WORKPLACE GAPJIL: MAIN FACTOR - WORKPLACE POWER IMBALANCE

- The sense of power that leaders get from their higher status and authority
- The sense of fear that employees have stops them from resisting the abuse
    - Employees can be demoted or even fired in an instance and on the spot



WORKPLACE GAPJIL: YOUTH LED MOVEMENTS

- Employees of Korean Air have taken steps to speak about corruption, abuse and other illegal activities
- 500 Uniformed employees held candle-light vigil on Gwanghwamin Square to protest against treatment from the CHO family
- The Korean Airline Employees Solidarity Labour Union was founded



WORKPLACE GAPJIL: LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- South Korea's New Workplace Harassment Laws prohibit employers from punishing victims who report Gapjil or workplace abuse
- Employers who take measures against victims face prison time and fines



WORKPLACE GAPJIL: CONTINUED CHALLENGES



The rootedness of authority and hierarchy remains to be an obstacle to effective whistle-blowing and decreasing the by-stander effect towards gapjil in the workplace





RECOMMENDATION #1

LEGISLATION TO PROMOTE TRUE MERITOCRACY

- Government should **institute incentives for companies** to open more job postings across various levels. (baseline to ease competitiveness of the market)
- **Equal internship opportunities** from schools to public/private institutions and companies, and internships that can **prioritise entry into full-time roles**
- Education institutions (colleges and universities) are **not allowed to receive donations or be influenced by a student's family background** to allow entry of the students into the school
- Job entry requirements will solely be based on academic achievements, volunteering and other credentials

RECOMMENDATION #2

STRICTER REINFORCEMENT AGAINST SCHOOL VIOLENCE

- Principals and headmasters face severe consequences (public & private schools) if found to not have made necessary efforts to curb school violence
- Enforce intolerance to bullying: Anti-bullying Commission

RECOMMENDATION #2

TRAINING AND EQUIPPING WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS



- Teachers should adopt the Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal and Jacobsen, 1968)
- Pedagogical action
- Teaching values such as *chung* through education and curriculum
- Teachers to work closely with students' parents
- Schools to connect with local community (out-of-school violence)
- Teachers must be involved at the school-policy level and take wellbeing of students as important, if not more than regular academic teaching

RECOMMENDATION #3

CHANGING CULTURAL MINDSETS

- Through changes in formal institutions
- Providing safe channels for whistleblowing and effective bystander action
- Educate employees on anti-gapjil legislation (LSA)
- Well-trained HR department in companies to manage welfare and wellbeing of all employees
- HR can report severe or unresolved issues to the state ministries



OVERALL: WHAT CAN KOREAN YOUTHS DO?

- More conversation regarding issues that is injustice ("calling out culture")
- Build communities online/offline to champion causes led by the younger generation
- In universities and student unions, raise awareness about the different issues
- During elections, speak out concerns to mayors and politicians
- Participate in peaceful demonstrations such as the candlelight demonstrations

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF 왕따 (WANGTTA)?

A. A type of silent bullying that refers to exclusion of an individual from a group

B. Used to refer to bad kids in schools, otherwise known as the school bully

C. Refers to a more directed abuse of one particular victim

WHAT IS THE MAIN FACTOR OF WORKPLACE GAPJIL?

MAIN FACTOR OF WORKPLACE GAPJIL

Workplace power imbalance - sense of power in the leaders to abuse their authority and a sense of fear in the employees over their livelihoods

WHAT DOES 'HELL JOSEON' REFER TO?

A. Blame mindset towards President Moon Jae In and the government for failing to deliver on their electoral promises

B. A historical term used to describe poverty, slavery and the class divide during in the Goryeo era.

C. A satirical term aimed at publicly criticising the current socio-economic status, growing inequality and cultural norm of 'connections for success'.

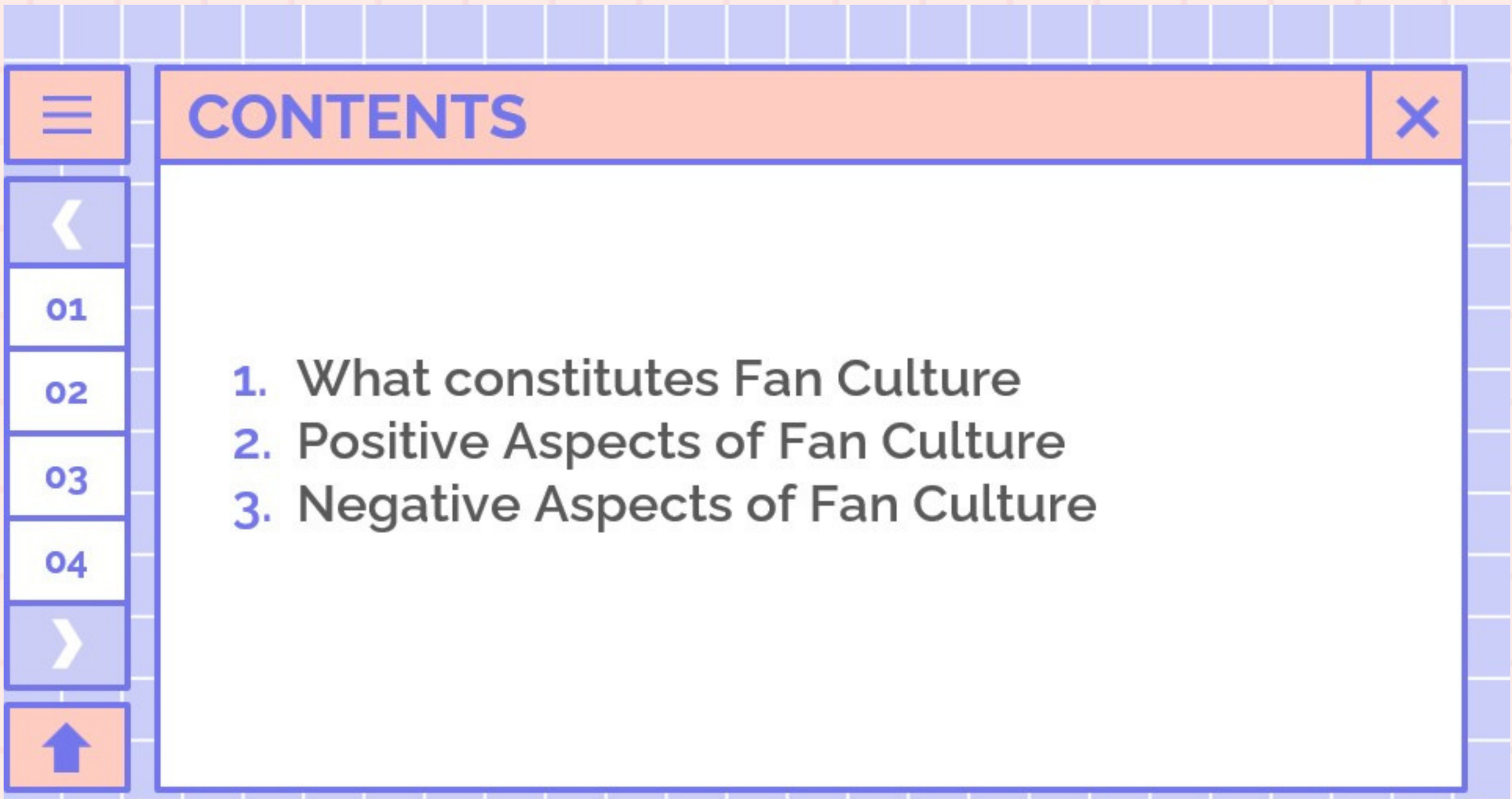



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THIRD ISSUE
똑바로 해! 큰 소리로!
https://youtu.be/2JpX6oDCvHU (1.40-2.15)

K-POP FAN CULTURE

By: Karina, Nivedha, Rachael & Venessa

ENTER


CONTENTS
01
02
03
04
1. What constitutes Fan Culture
2. Positive Aspects of Fan Culture
3. Negative Aspects of Fan Culture

01.

FAN-CULTURE

CONCERTS,
PERFORMANCES, EVENTS

PHYSICAL PROMOTIONS

CONCERTS / FANMEETING /
LIVE EVENTS / FANSIGN

FANSIGNS

- More exclusive to K-pop
- Hold fansigns throughout promotion period
- Chosen via raffle





FANCHANTS



FANCHANTS

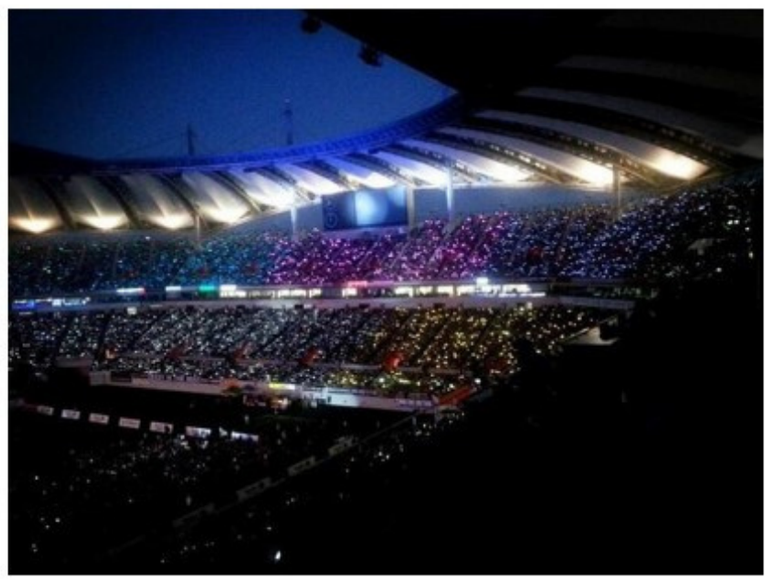
SUPPORT

- Chanted while the idols are performing
- Encourages the idols

SENSE OF UNITY

- Everyone is expected to chant together

MERCHANDISES

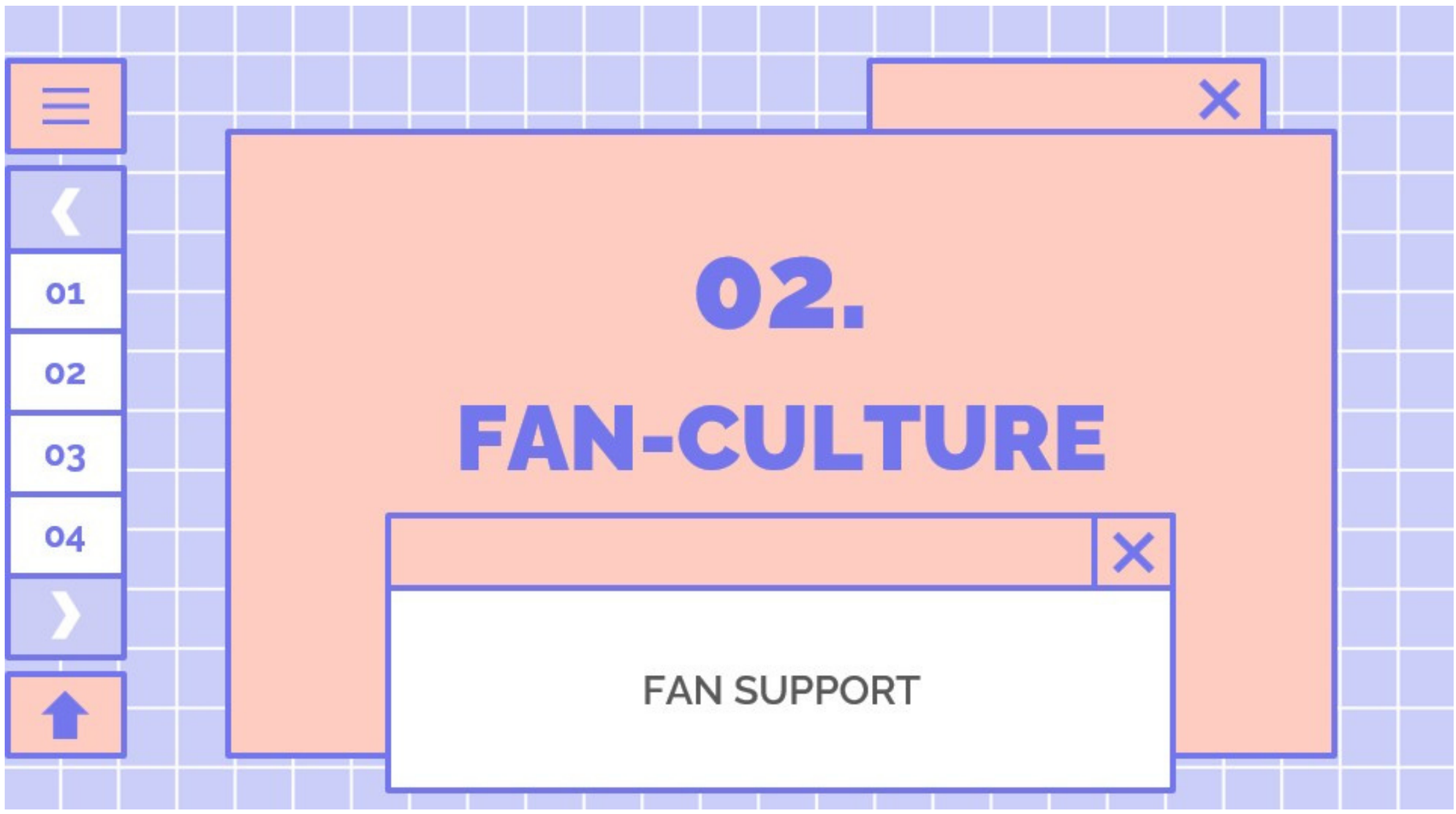


- Bring them along during official events
- Sense of belonging
- Different compared to other entertainment industries

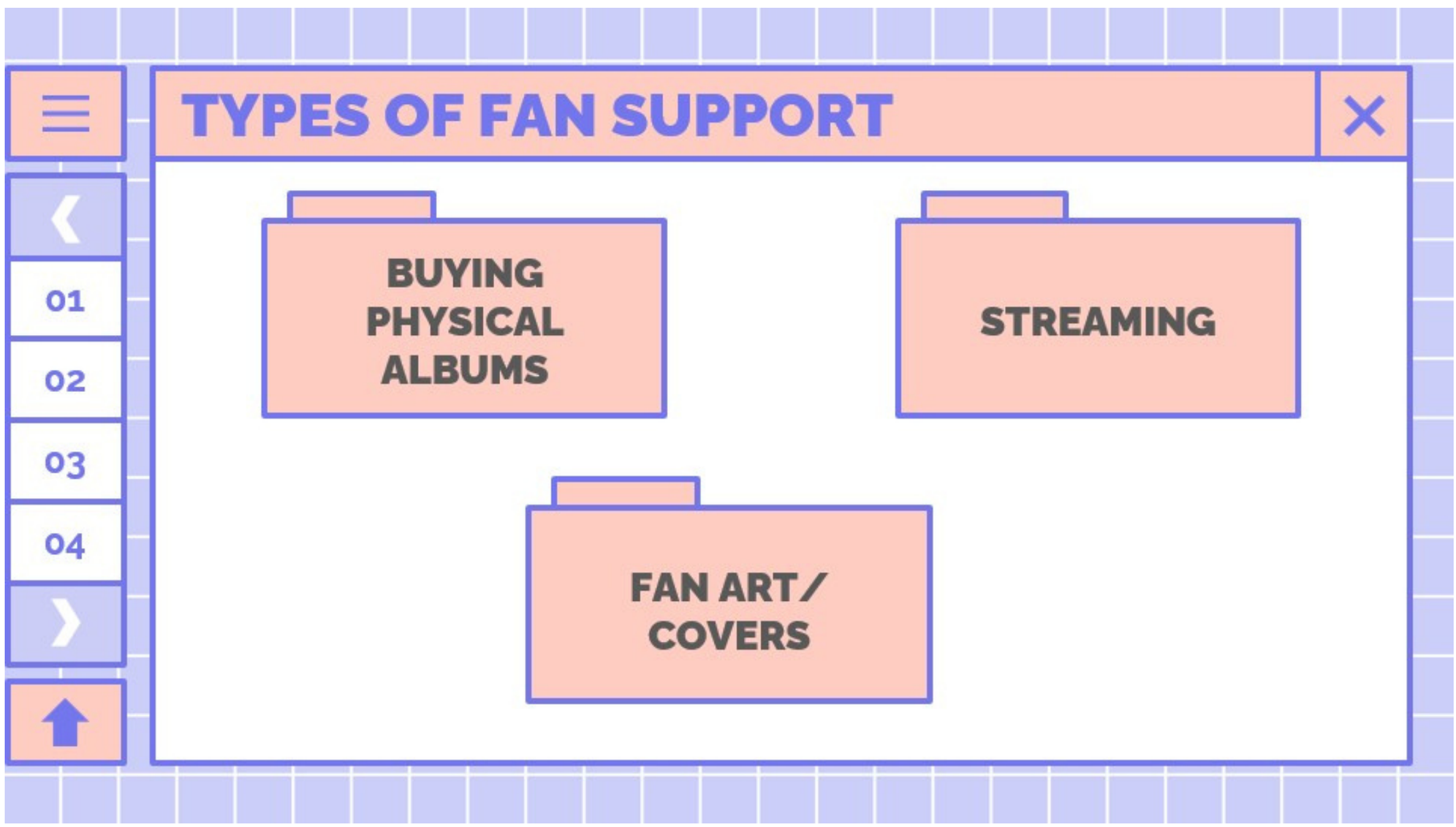
FANSITES

- Upload high quality pictures / fancams
- Fans are supportive of them
- Release fangoods as well
- Can be important to the idols as well




01
02
03
04
02.
FAN-CULTURE
FAN SUPPORT


01
02
03
04
FAN-SUPPORT
AN ORGANISED FORM OF FAN ACTIVITY


TYPES OF FAN SUPPORT
01
02
03
04
BUYING PHYSICAL ALBUMS
STREAMING
FAN ART/ COVERS

BUYING PHYSICAL ALBUMS

01
02
03
04

- Rise of online music streaming platforms
- Global decline in sale of physical albums
- But K-Pop albums sold well in 2020!

BUYING PHYSICAL ALBUMS

01
02
03
04

- Fans desire to support artistes due to losses from the pandemic



BUYING PHYSICAL ALBUMS

01
02
03
04

- Different album designs and random collectibles





01
02
03
04

STREAMING

REPEATEDLY WATCHING/
REPLAYING VIDEOS OR SONGS

01
02
03
04

STREAMING

- Closely related to purchase of albums → chart rankings
- Fan-created guides
- Unity to achieve shared goal



01
02
03
04

STREAMING

- Celebration of x number of views
- Release of exclusive content in return for views





01
02
03
04

FAN ART

RANGES FROM DRAWINGS TO
COVERS ETC

01
02
03
04

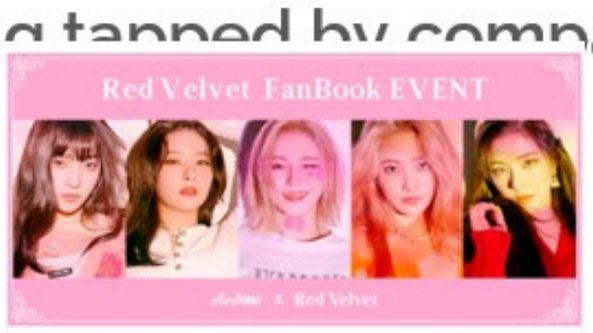
FAN ART

- Leverages upon interests and talents to pay tribute to favourite artistes
- Digital drawings, song covers, remixes etc

01
02
03
04

FAN ART

- Can help promote artistes
- Potential being tapped by companies
  - Fanbook



FanBook X Red Velvet Fan Art EVENT Winner announcement

Red Velvet has made their comeback with the repackage album 'The Reve Festival' Finale'. Draw a Fan Art to support Red Velvet's activities of this album which is the climax of this year's music parade!

2019-12-30 ~ 2020-01-26

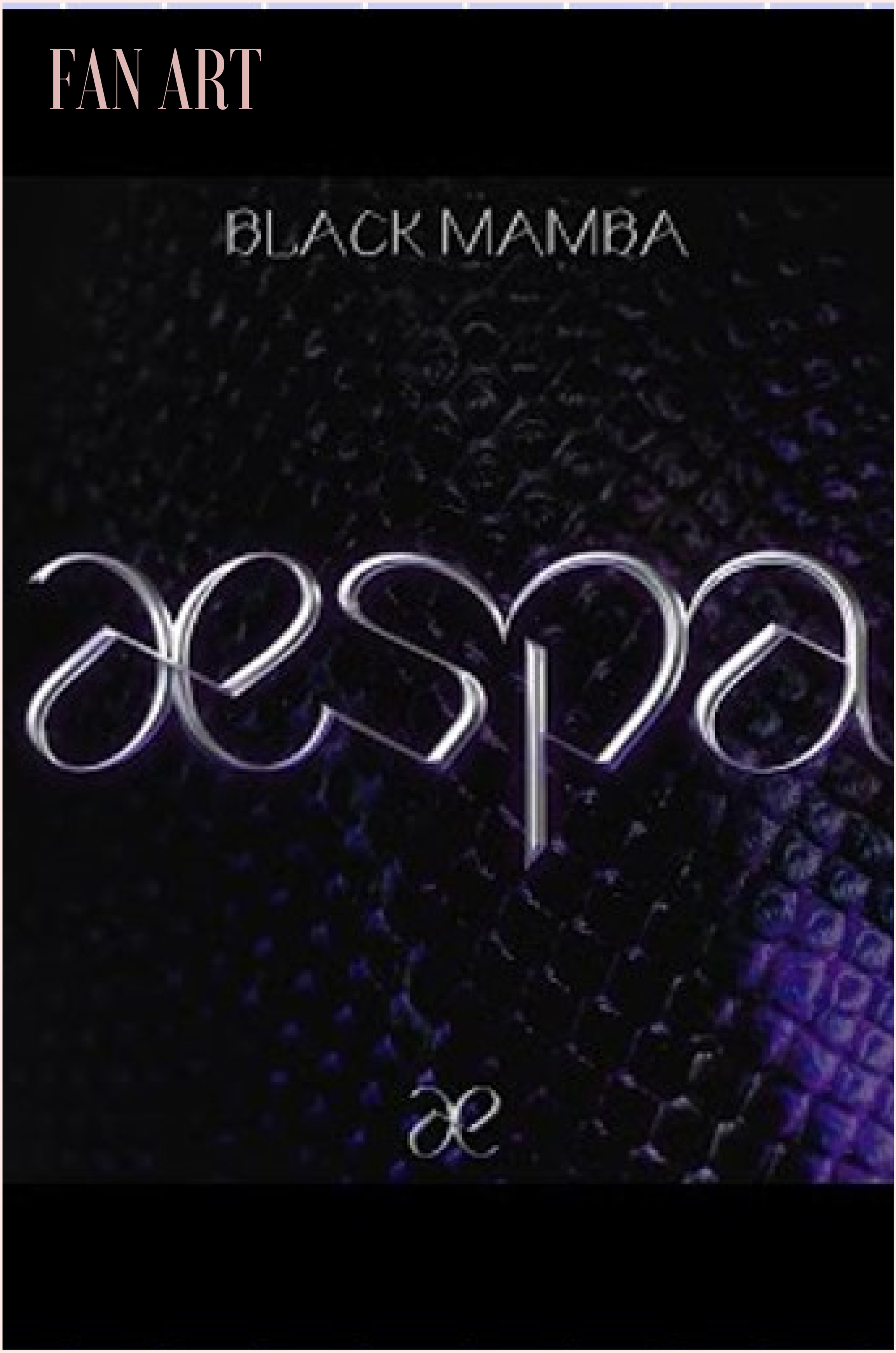


FanBook X NCT DREAM Fan Art EVENT Winner announcement

Create Fan Arts supporting 'the hottest teenager group' NCT DREAM's third mini album 'We Boom' activities!

2019-08-01 ~ 2019-08-29

FAN ART



03.

Positive Aspects

Solidarity

Like-minded people to bond with

Fandom specific stories/language

Activism

Rallying together for political/social causes

Help Idols

Boost idols'/songs' popularity

e.g. Hani https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmKuGxb23zo

Economy

Consumerism

Tourism

Interests

Interest in musicals, dramas that idols are in

Interest in Korean culture/language

Interest in exploring Korea

Experience

Official: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFMQ2kmnfKY [3:38-3:49]

Fancam: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOAMDe68mVI [3:06-3:17]

04.

Negative Aspects

TOXIC FAN CULTURE

- OBSESSIVE FANS
- CYBER VIGILANTISM
- FAN WARS
- IDOL HATE

Obsessive Fans

- Also known as *sasaengs*
  - The term means 'private life' but it is used instead to refer to how these fans invade upon their idol's privacy
- Overly obsessive, stalkerish fans who intrude upon idols' personal spaces, which can sometimes endanger both the idol(s) and themselves
- Sometimes, this private information about the idols is sold online via social media platforms
  - Such information includes: Home addresses, mobile numbers, flight details, personal social media, credit card numbers, etc
  - Sellers also offer to sell the methods by which such personal information was collected
- Agencies fear to take a firm stance on this issue since they do not want to risk losing fan support, and there are no firm laws that prevent/penalise such invasive activities

Cybervigilantism

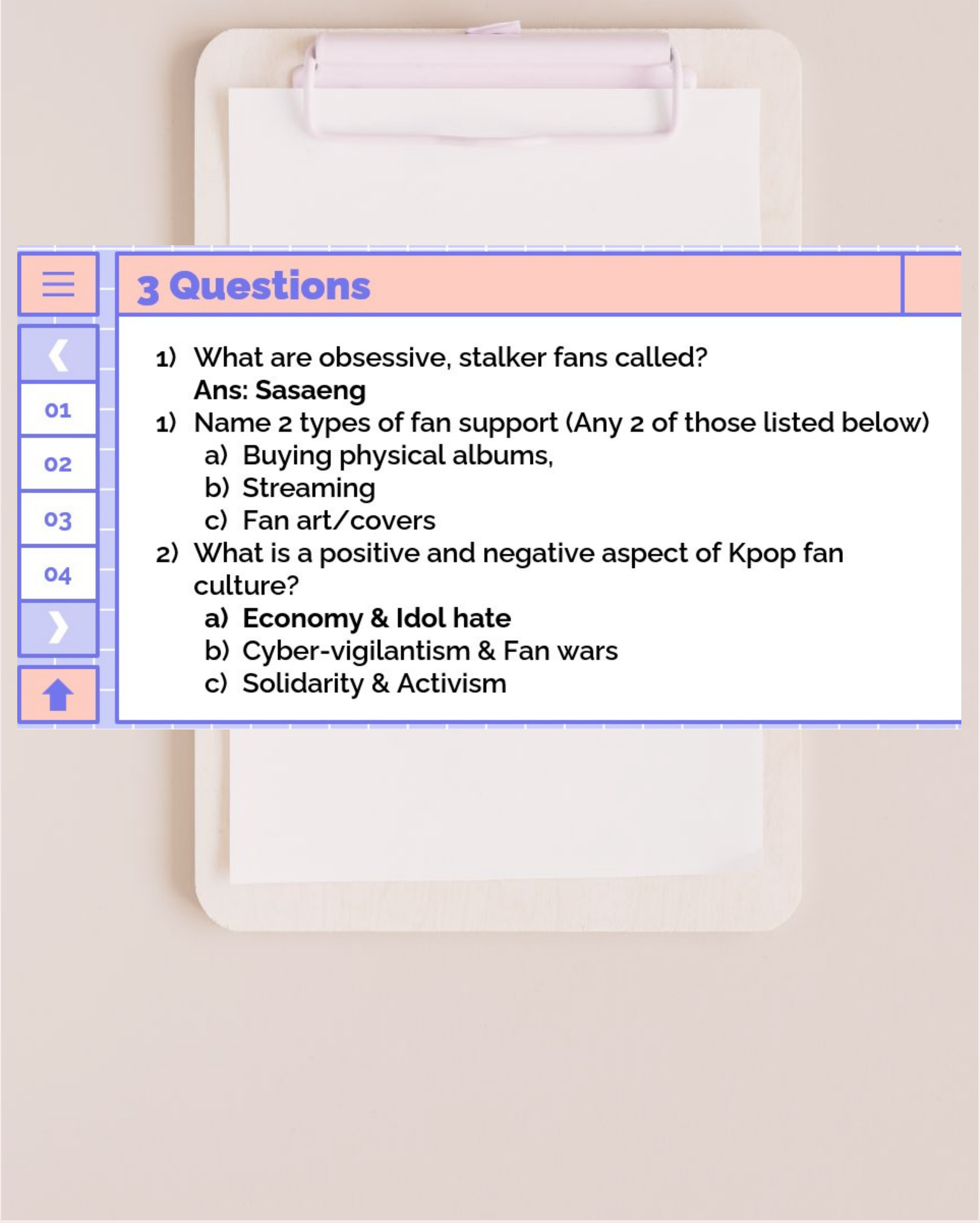
- Collective vigilantism on the Web as a way of delivering social justice
  - 2PM *Oktaecyeon saengri hyeolseo* (Ok Taecyeon Menstrual Blood Love Letter)
  - Many of such other blood-related expressions of adulations were met with the publicisation of their personal information as a warning sign and/or show of retaliation - Personal Identification Theft
- Problem: Ethical issue of dissemination of private information without consent

Fan Wars

- Fans of different groups who fiercely compete against one another
  - Some notable examples: SECHSKIES fans vs H.O.T. fans (and in more recent times, ARMYs and EXO-Ls)
- These brawls have no tenable benefits and only bring more trouble for both fans and the idols themselves
  - Ironically, in the name of garnering fame for their idols, this fame is more of the infamous kind that risks tarnishing the reputations of both the idols and their fandoms

Idol 'Hate'/Criticism

- Criticism directed towards idols usually because of skill-related concerns and/or scandals that these idols may be involved in
  - Examples of some idols who have been criticised extensively: Blackpink's Jennie, Mamamoo's Hwasa, (G)-Idle's Soyeon, BTS' Jimin/J-Hope
- Problem: Leads to mental health issues, primarily depression and anxiety
- Sometimes, the extent of hate is so extreme that some of these idols end up taking drastic measures
  - E.g. Suicide of f(x)'s Sulli - some antis even went so far as to celebrate her death



3 Questions

1) What are obsessive, stalker fans called?
   Ans: Sasaeng
1) Name 2 types of fan support (Any 2 of those listed below)
   a) Buying physical albums,
   b) Streaming
   c) Fan art/covers
2) What is a positive and negative aspect of Kpop fan culture?
   a) **Economy & Idol hate**
   b) Cyber-vigilantism & Fan wars
   c) Solidarity & Activism


EXIT
K-POP FAN CULTURE
By: Karina, Nivedha, Rachael & Venessa
ENTER


Uploaded by LQ



How Mukbang started and where it stands today

Joanna Ng Shu En U1930718B
Kimberly Tay Jing Qi U1931040D
Yoon Seoh Jin U2030991H
and Talia Voon Jin Yi U1931681B



Table of contents

01 Introduction

History of Mukbang

02 Pros

The rise and popularity of Mukbang

03 Global

How Mukbang became a global phenomenon

04 Cons

The controversies of Mukbang

What is “Mukbang”?





Meoknun

“Eating”

Bangsong

“Broadcast”

Historical Origin

- Began in South Korea in 2008
- Basic streaming sites like AfreecaTV as a live broadcast → later developed to YouTube Platform as pre-recorded videos
- Developed sub-genres such as ASMR



01

The rise and popularity of Mukbangs

Advanced technology and fast speed internet

95.9%

Internet Penetration

46.35M

Internet Users

Companionship

- Eating as a communal activity — “banchan culture”
- Strong social value in eating
- Increasing number of Koreans living alone
- Mukbangs mimic emotional connection





Mukbang as empowerment

- Glorified binge eating takes back the sense of powerlessness experienced by binging
- Dissipating the shame that comes with excessive eating
- Female Mukbangers have a more significant effect
- History of fetishization → the female Mukbanger is transgressive in going against the demure image



Vicarious consumption



- Strong ‘diet culture’ in South Korea
- Mukbang videos satisfy viewers’ desire to eat without them actually consuming any food
- Compensatory Use Internet Model (CUIM)
  - Individuals use the internet in order to compensate unattained offline needs via specific online activities

Vicarious consumption



The voyeuristic pleasure from watching Mukbangs

- Transference of food from plate to body as a highly carnal act
- Position of vulnerability when eating
- ASMR + viewing through a screen
- Gastronomic appetite // sexual appetite





Watching Mukbangs as a form of escapism

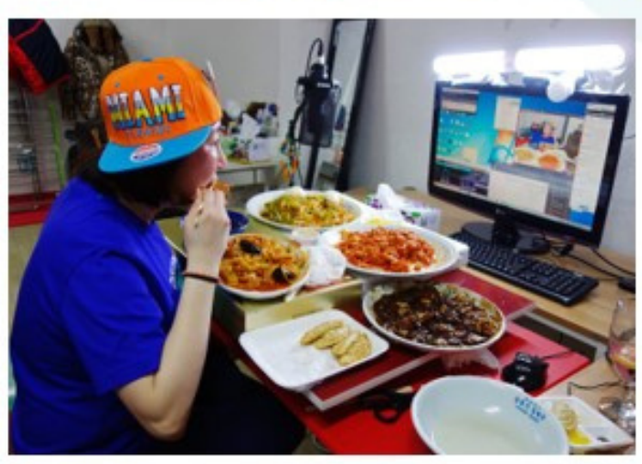
- Majority of South Koreans suffer from stress
- South Korea has one of the highest suicide rate among OECD countries
- Watching Mukbangs serve as an outlet to relieve stress



Mukbangs as a source of income

- Plausible job industry
  - Low barriers to entry
  - Potential for high earnings: South Korean Mukbangers can earn an average of $10,000 per month
  - Mukbangers do not need to conform to a certain look or behaviour
  - Globalised status of Mukbangs





Mukbangs as a source of income

- Mukbang as a part of digital capitalism
- Mukbangers' incomes mainly generated through:
  - Fan gifts of digital currency
  - Advertisements
  - Sponsorships



Mukbangs as a source of income

- Advertisements
  - Eg. Mukbanger Lee earns 30% of his total income from advertisements
- Sponsorships
  - Mukbangers' broadcasting their shows in restaurants
  - Featuring branded food like Nando's and Domino's Pizza





Mukbangs as a source of income

- Costs of employing Mukbangers for marketing relatively lower compared to celebrity marketing
- Many Mukbangers prefer to consume large quantities of food during their broadcasts
  - Allows them to reap greater profits





02

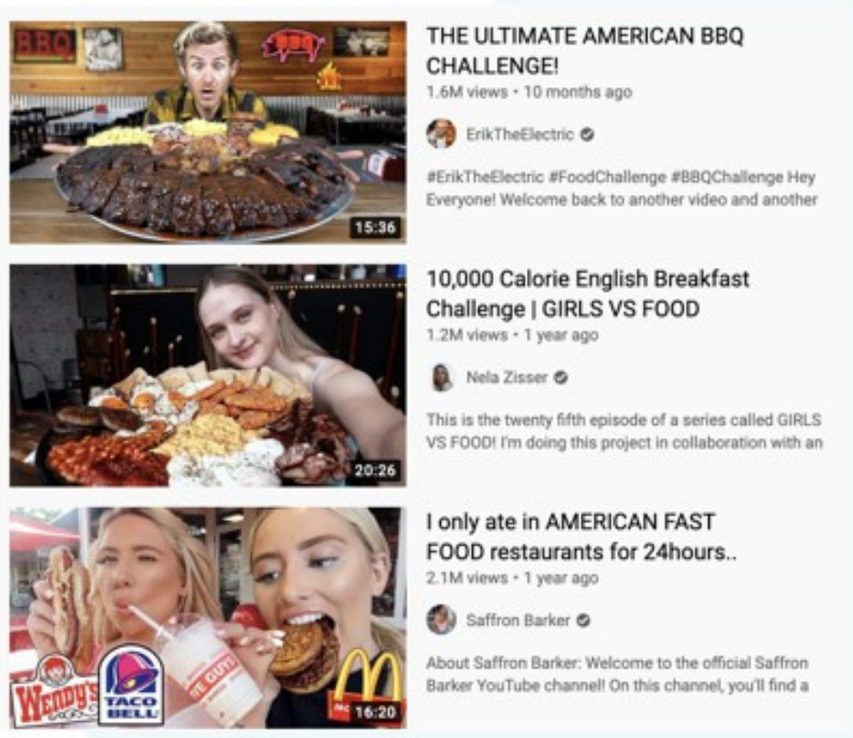
How did Mukbang spread worldwide?

Reactions to Mukbang

- **Mixed reactions initially: Fascinating VS Bewildered**
- Nonetheless, many Western YouTubers soon followed suit
- In recent years, Mukbang has even developed into a new genre that dominates YouTube

How Mukbang Spread Worldwide

- Mukbang made its way to the US in 2015 (by US entertainment duo 'The Fine Brothers')
- Gained global traction when American YouTubers began to partake in this food phenomenon



Differences between Korean and US Mukbang

01 The way Mukbangs are broadcasted

02 The way Mukbangers earn money

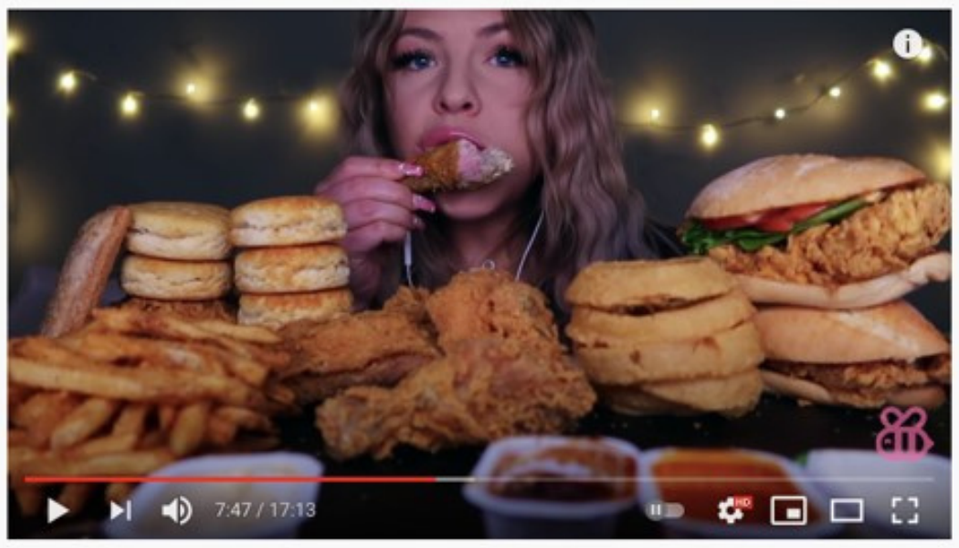
03 The way Mukbangs are hosted

(1) How Mukbangs are broadcasted



Banzz▼ Sausage Stew Ramen X5, Lunch box variety at 5AM! Mukbang (Eating Show)
2,855,071 views

Korea: **Live-streamed** on AfreecaTV, Twitch & YouTube



#mostpopularfood #popeyes #asmreating
ASMR MOST POPULAR FOOD AT POPEYES (CHICKEN SANDWICH, FRIED CHICKEN, CAJUN FRIES, BISCUITS MUKBANG 먹방
8,777,650 views • Nov 30, 2019 156K 17K SHARE SAVE

US: **Pre-recorded** & uploaded on YouTube

(2) How Mukbangers earn money

- South Korea: Mostly though Audience donations (Cyber money)
- US: Solely through Ad revenue & Sponsorships on YouTube





(3) How Mukbangs are hosted

South Korea:

- Live-streamed during typical dinner hours
- Mostly silent so that attention will not be drawn away from the food

US:

- More of a 'let's get to know me' session
- Tend to be conversational even when videos are pre-recorded

Impact of COVID-19 on the Mukbang Industry

Increased demand for more Mukbang during the COVID-19 pandemic

Possible Reasons

- With reduced real-life interaction, people seek Mukbang videos for companionship during a meal and to reduce their loneliness
- Mukbangs helps to relieve stress & provide pleasure and happiness
- Helps to satisfy one's craving when 'outside' food is no longer as accessible as before



03

Controversies

The downsides to Mukbang

Controversies in Mukbang

- The promotion of unhealthy eating habits
- Dishonesty and fooling fans
- Animal abuse accusations
- Hard work behind the screen

The promotion of unhealthy eating habits

- Mukbangers consume large portions of food that are high in calories and contain mainly saturated fats
- Do not practise regular eating hours
- Takes a toll on the human body
- Face short/long term diseases
- Eg. gastrointestinal diseases, heart diseases, diabetes
- Viewers are unaware of the health risks that comes along with it

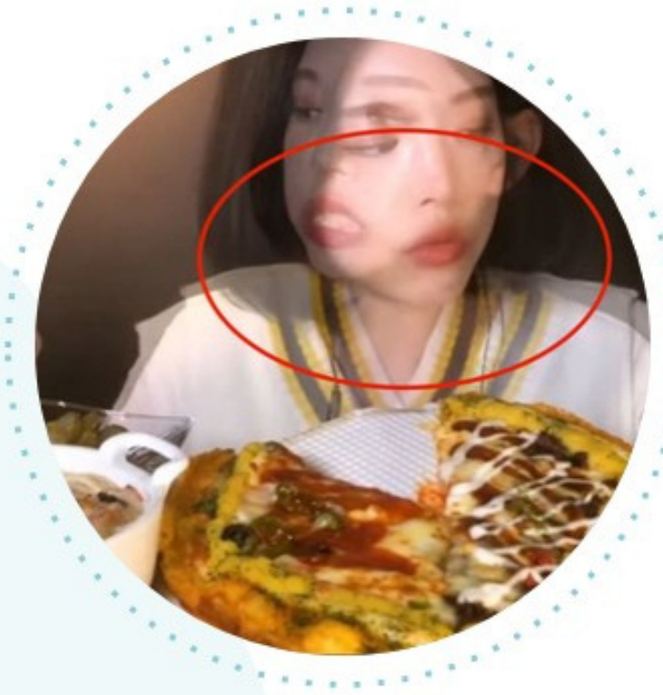






Dishonesty and fooling fans

Eat With Boki

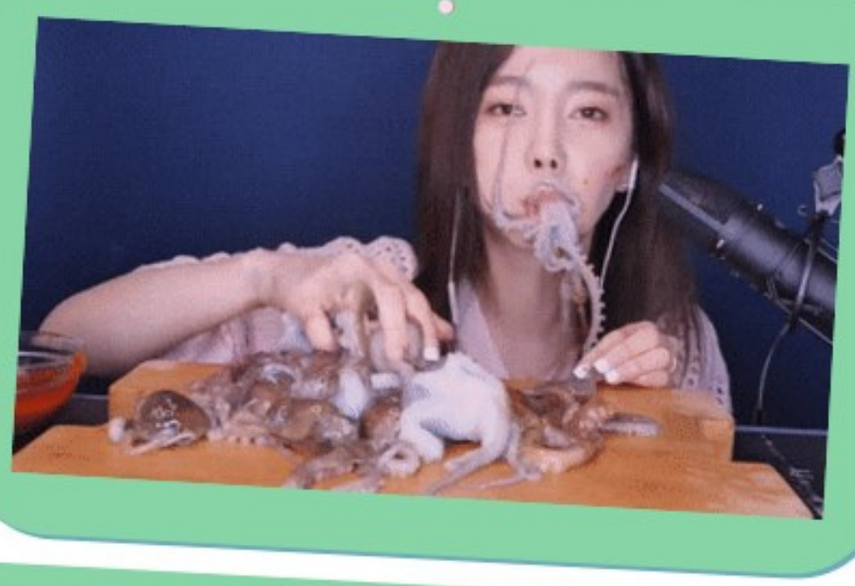


Fake Eating & Secret Sponsorships

- Accused of pretending to eat her food and chewing them just for show
- She also accepted deals for sponsored videos without declaring to her viewers
- These made fans believe that the food were purchased with her own money
- Made people question the reliability of Youtubers and Influencers

Animal Abuse Accusations

Ssoyoung

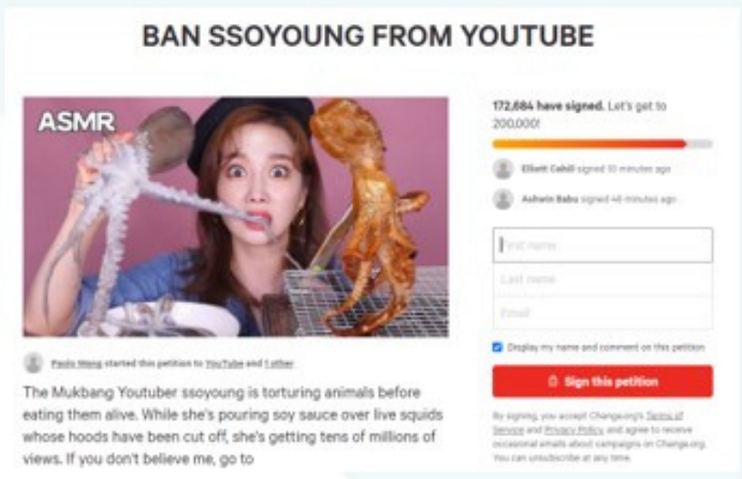


- Introducing live seafood on screen before consuming them immediately
- Agitate them to incite a visceral reaction as they fight back with her
- Accused of animal cruelty and torture for monetary gain

Huge Debate

Animal Torture

"It is absolutely unacceptable to not only fail to kill an animal humanely before cooking it but to also perform acts of mutilation that effectively amounts to torture."



Korea's Culture

- Eating live seafood, especially octopus is part of Korea's culture.
- "As Ssoyoung is a Korean Youtuber, we put our basis on Korean Food Culture."



What goes on behind the screen

- Intense amount of hard work is invested behind the screen
- Mukbangers exercise more than regular people to maintain their figure
- Korean Mukbanger Banzz exercises for 12 hours a day
- Ssoyoung created a workout channel to bring viewers through her workout routine





Mukbang around the world



Li Ziqi

Promotes rural living and cooking of food in China



Stephanie Soo

Shares horror stories, crime cases and conspiracy theories while eating



Yuka Kinoshita

Consumes massive amounts of food up to 12,000 calories



Quang Tran

Clear, pure enjoyment of food and sharing of recipes with viewers

What is the global future of Mukbang?



America

Youtube mukbangs





China

Promotion of rural food



????

Limitless potential to go anywhere & facilitate cross-cultural appreciation

Korea



Increase in delivery services

Additional advertising avenue



Q1: how did mukbang spread worldwide ?



(a) Koreans Mukbang BJs collaborated with Western YouTubers in the beginning

(b) The Korean government promoted Mukbang in the US

(c) American YouTubers began to partake in this food phenomenon after a video posted by The Fine Brothers went viral

(d) The success of Korean Mukbang BJs inspired their western counterparts to do so

Q2: List 3 benefits of Mukbang

01 **Companionship**

02 **Vicarious consumption**

03 **Avenue of empowerment**

04 **Form of escapism**

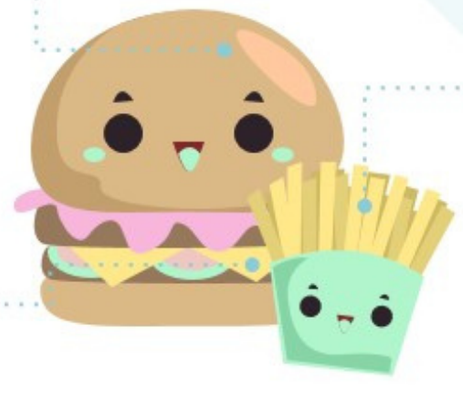
05 **Voyeuristic pleasure**

06 **Source of income**

Q3: What is the difference between Korean and US Mukbang?

How Mukbangs are broadcasted

How Mukbang BJs earn money



The way Mukbangs are hosted



Participants of the first NTU Student Mini Conference on Korea.



TOURISM IN SOUTH KOREA



Ang Xin Ling Adelle
Catherine Seah Qian Yi
Charlotte Ethel Tan
Lai Xuan Kai, Darren



HISTORY OF TOURISM

Globally, South Korea is one of the more prominent holiday destinations among tourists. Due to the country's long-standing history and culture that is deeply embedded in the Korean way of life, South Korea is a beloved tourist destination as visitors can experience the distinctive harmony between its historical and modern culture. Additionally, the spiral of Korean popular culture, also known as the 'Korean Wave', or

' Hallyu ' , has played a significant role in boosting South Korea's tourism industry.

With multiple economically advanced cities such as Seoul, Busan, Incheon and Daegu, South Korea attracts many international visitors annually. The number of inbound visitors into South Korea has been on an upward trend with a record high of 17.5 million people in 2019.

However, the number of visitors has dropped to 2.52 million visitors in 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the lowest number since 2000 (Statista, 2021). Despite this sharp drop, revenue brought in by South Korea's tourism industry still amounted to USD10.44 billion, which is a substantial amount that underscores the importance of South Korea's tourism industry in contributing to its rapidly growing economy.



SEASONS

South Korea enjoys a temperate climate that can be split into four distinct seasons, namely spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

SPRING

Spring in Korea predominantly lasts between April and June. The average daily temperature ranges from 15°C to 18°C, and the season is generally perceived as the best time for tourists to visit South Korea. Many festivals, such as the Jinhae Cherry Blossom Festival and Ultra Korea, are held during Spring as the weather is least likely to be inclement. Moreover, flowers are i n bloom and the view across the country often carries a mixture of pink hues from the blooming cherry blossoms in addition to its existing greenery. Many locals also frequent the various national parks, such as Dadohaesang, Seoraksan and Bukhansan during the season.

SUMMER

Summer in Korea typically lasts between July and August, with an average daily temperature ranging from 23°C to 30°C. Festivals in summer include the Boryeong Mud Festival and the Sinchon Water Gun Festiva l. Summer is the hottest yet wettest time of the year in Korea, with monsoon rains accounting for half of the country's annual rainfall.



THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIMPLY BEING A TOURIST AND BEING A TRUE WORLD TRAVELER

AUTUMN

Autumn in Korea routinely lasts between September and November, with the aver age daily temperature ranging from 19°C to 21°C. The weather in autumn can be extremely humid. Some festivals that take place in autumn are the Jinju Lantern Festival, Chuseok, and the Gwangju World Kimchi Festival. During this season, national parks in So uth Korea are usually coloured in shades of red and orange due to the falling leaves from trees.

WINTER

Winter in Korea generally lasts between December to March, with the average daily temperatures ranging from -15°C to 11°C. During winter, a Korean weather phenomenon, known as samha saon , usually results in three cold days following four mild ones. Example s of festivals that take place during this season include the Seollal Lunar New Year and the Boseong Tea Plantation Light Festival. Some common activities that tourists can do would be to ski and/or snowboard at the ski resorts in the Gangwon-do and Gyeong gi-do Provinces.



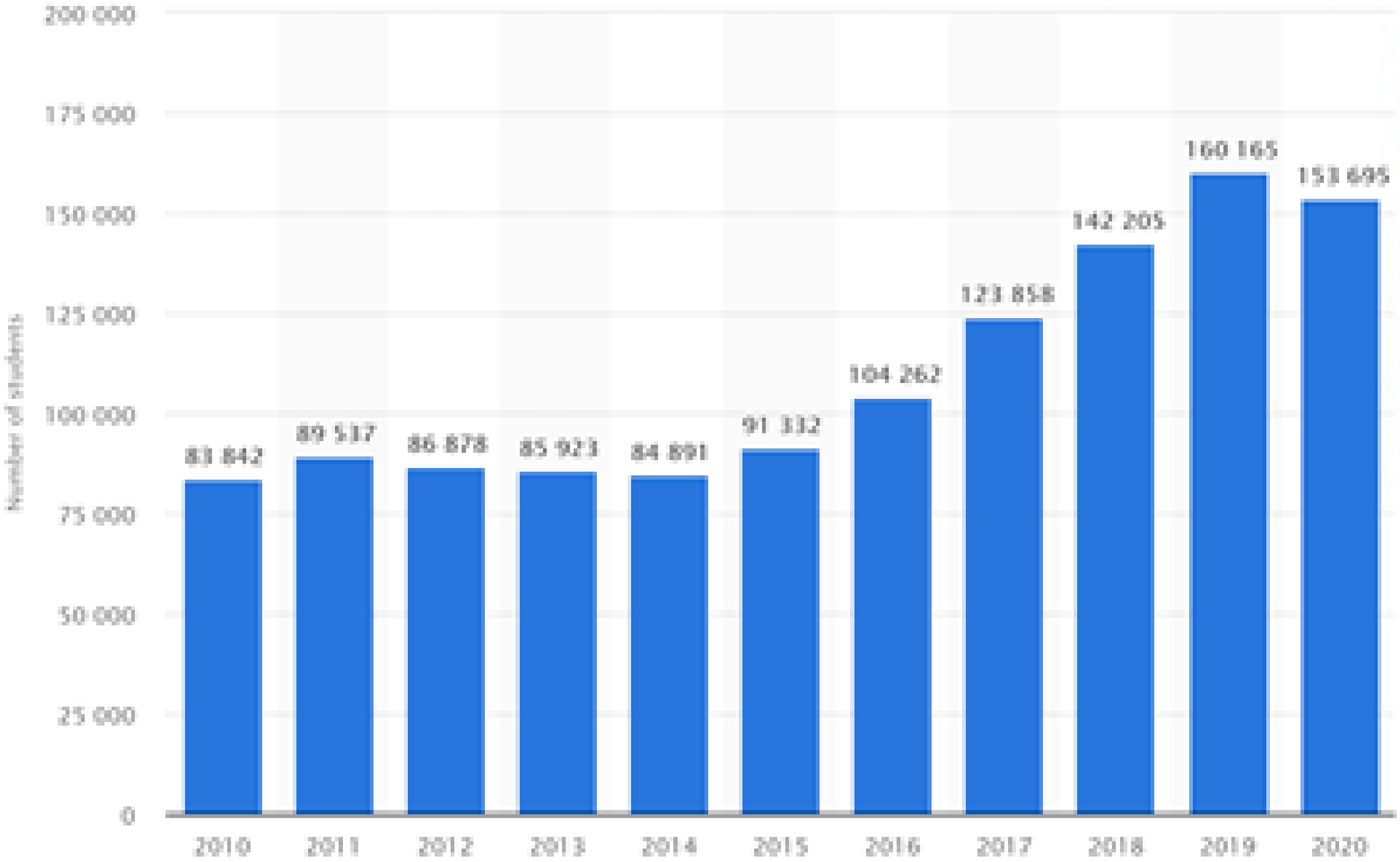


PLASTIC SURGERY

South Korea is widely regarded as the “plastic surgery capital” of the world due to its experienced doctors, affordable procedures, and conveniently located clinics. In 2018, nearly 50,000 foreigners visited South Korea for plastic surgery, with the total expenditure reaching USD189 million (Lee, 2019). Public access to plastic surgeries has boomed in recent years due to advancements in medical technology and the rapid evolution of social media. Furthermore, the Hallyu trend has resulted in the masses aspiring for the physical perfection of Korean singers and actors. With fewer stigmas associated with plastic surgery today, there is an increasing number of tourists travelling to South Korea to undergo plastic surgery in order to fix their self-perceived flaws.

Education

South Korea is renowned for being one of the most distinguished study destinations in Asia and the world. Aside from academic prestige, foreigners are also able to experience the unique culture th at started Hallyu . According to Figure 7, in 2020, approximately 154,000 foreign students were studying in South Korea (Statista, 2021). Study options comprises three main groups: (1) Korean language programmes (2) Study-abroad semesters and (3) Full degree programmes.



Korean Language Programmes

The Korean Wave has encouraged many foreigners to learn Hangul , skyrocketing the popularity of the Korean language. Fans of Korean pop music (K-Pop) want to be able to sing their favorite Korean songs while Korean drama (K-Drama) lovers want to be able to watch their beloved programmes without having to read the subtitles. This has propelled foreigners to travel to Korea for a first-hand experience in learning the Korean language. In addition, the daily interactions with locals have been proven to be an eff icient and effective method in developing proficiency for the language.

Study-abroad Semesters & Full-degree Programmes Education

Universities in South Korea have consistently been ranked in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, with six of such institutions being part of the top 200 in 2020 (Times Higher Education World Rankings, 2020). The acronym “SKY” is used to refer to the three most prestigious universities in South Korea which consists of Seoul National University, Korea University , and Yonsei University. Additionally, the South Korean government has also been offering more scholarships to attract more foreign students in hopes of raising the foreign enrolment to 200,000 by the year 2023 (Mani, 2018).

Places of Interest

South Korea’ s rich culture allows tourists to have a variety of places to choose from to visit. There are historical sights, theme parks and entertainment joints, all catering to the interests of tourists from all walks of life.



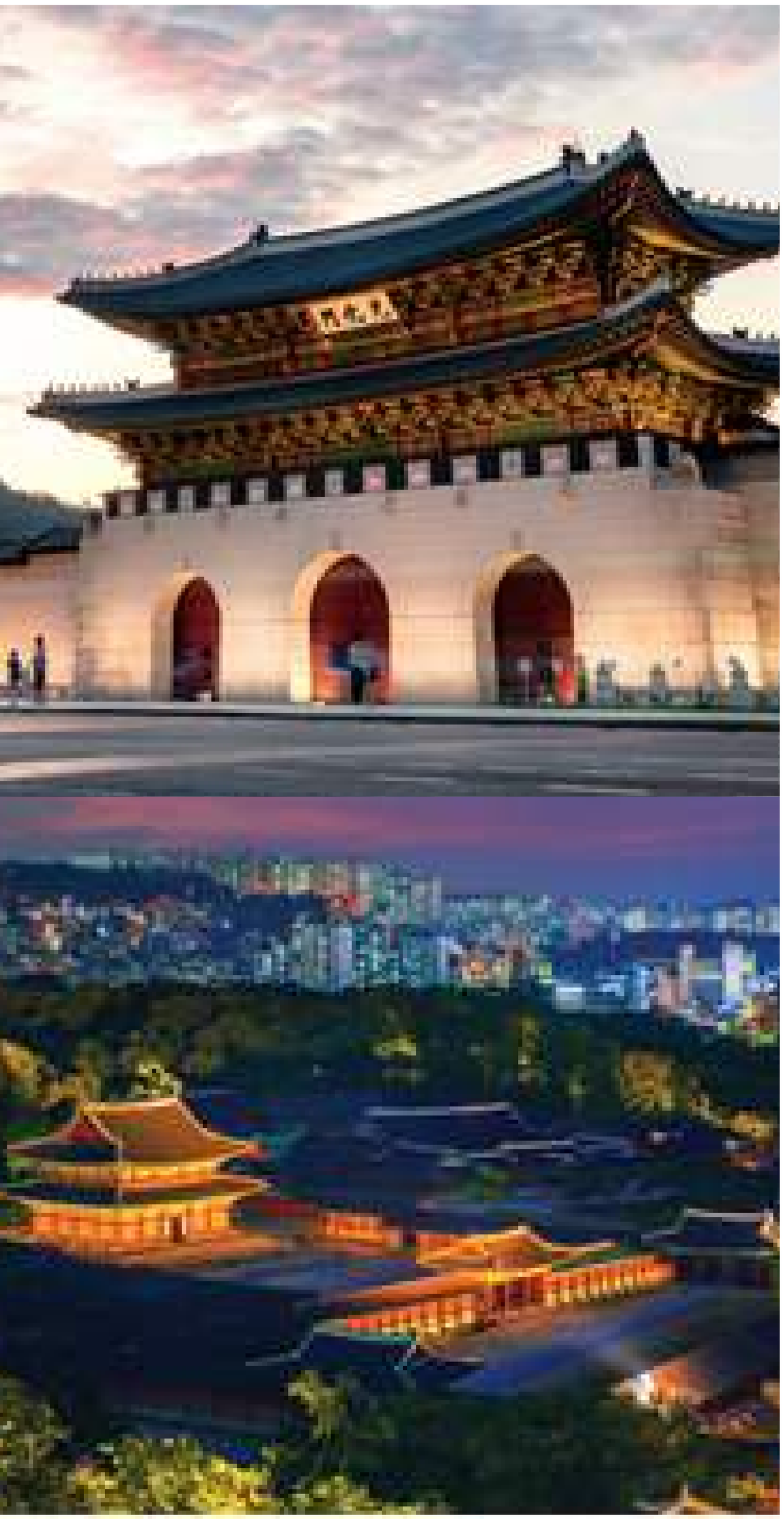
Korean Demilitarised Zone

The Korean De militarised Zone (DMZ) welcomes over 1.2 million tourists annually. The DMZ is approximately located along the 38th parallel, the line that demarcates North and South Korea. It incorporates both North and South Korean territory and is heavily militarised. To visit the DMZ, tourists have to book a guided private or group tour with established tour agencies, such as Koryo Tours in North Korea or Viator in South Korea. While visiting, tourists have to comply with strict rules and dress codes, and are also disc ouraged from wandering off path to avoid stepping on landmines.

Statue of King Sejong

Another historical landmark located in South Korea would be the Statue of King Sejong, which can be found at the centre of Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul. Previously known as Yukjo-geori (Avenue of Six Ministries), Gwanghwamun Square is now home to the govern ment's major administrative departments. The Statue of King Sejong the Great is the main attraction in Gwanghwamun Square. The main inventions from King Sejong's reign are displayed in front of the statue. Some inventions include the Hangul alphabet and ot her scientific instruments, such as the sundial, rain gauge, and celestial globe. In addition, the Sejong Museum of Art is located near Gwanghwamun Square, and features different materials and artifacts that illustrate the life and achievements of King Sejong.





Gyeongbokgung Palace and Changdeokgung Palace

The Gyeongbokgung and Changdeokgung Palace are popular places of interest to visit in South Korea. Built in 1395, Gyeongbokgung Palace (otherwise referred to as the "Northern Palace") is the largest palace out of the five in Seoul (namely Changgyeonggung, Deoksugung, Gyonghuigung, and Changdeokgung). The number of visitors is especially high during special Korean holidays, such as Chuseok, the Korean Thanksgiving Day, due to the various cultural programmes and events being held. Some examples are traditional Korean singing and dance performances, together with traditional Korean games and arts and crafts. The admission fee is also affordable, which contributes to the high number of visitors to the palace.

A well-known activity there is donning the traditional Korean attire, the Hanbok, and strolling around the palace and its surrounding villages. There are various Hanbok rental shops available in the area that offer full-day rentals, which also grants tourists a free access into the palace. This provides an opportunity for international tourists to fully indulge in the Korean culture.

Another notable palace located in South Korea is the Changdeokgung Palace. It has been designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site since 1997 due to its historical significance. Among the five remaining royal Joseon palaces, Changdeokgung is one of the most well-preserved ones and has a secret ' Biwon ' Garden within it. Dating back to the 15th century, Changdeokgung was once the principal palace for many ruling Joseon kings in Korea's history.



Jongmyo Shrine

If one is around the Gyeongbokgung Palace, there are several other recognised tourist destinations in the area. Located at the east of Gyeongbokgung Palace, Jongmyo Shrine is a Confucian shrine of the Joseon Dynasty that was named a UNESCO world cultural a sset in 1995. It was used in the past to enshrine kings and queens of the Joseon Dynasty, who were widely revered during their reign for establishing the country and doing their best for their people. During their visit, tourists are also able to witness t he ‘ Jongmyo Jaerye ’, which is the oldest complete memorial service in the world. The Confucian ritual, originating more than 500 years ago, consists of dance and song as part of the ceremony.

Bukchon Hanok Village

Surrounded by Jongmyo Shrine, Changdeokgung Palace, and Gyeongbokgung Palace, Bukchon Hanok Village consists of 860 “ hanoks ”, also known as traditional houses that date back to the Joseon Dynasty. As of today, many of these traditional houses are still operational, each serving different functions such as restaurants, tea houses, guesthouses, as well as cultural centers . The preservation of the Bukchon Hanok Village, which is also known to be a living museum, retains most of the country’s deeply-rooted traditions and c ultures, and tourists are able to truly experience Korea by touring the area. Bukchon Hanok Village has also been featured multiple times on various popular Korean TV shows such as SBS’s Heirs and Mnet’s Monster.





Gamcheon Culture Village

Built on a steep mountainside slope, Gamcheon Culture Village is known as one of the most featured tourist attractions in Busan, bringing in over 1 million tourists annually. It was transformed into a cultural hub in 2009 by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. During its revival, artists from the public were contracted to decorate the buildings, and their efforts turned Gamcheon Culture Village into Busan’s most colourful and artistic area. Empty houses in the village have also been turned into shops and museums, where art installations and sculptures are put on sale or displayed to visitors.

Namsan Park & Seoul Tower

The Namsan Seoul Tower is an attractive destination among tourists. It allows visitors to admire the views of the city while providing a variety of dining options that are suitable for any travel budget. Some attractions at the Namsan Seoul Tower include t he Hanbok Culture Experience Centre, the love padlocks, as well as Namsan Park. Tourists are also able to rent Hanboks in the Hanbok Culture Experience Centre and have a photoshoot at the studio in the centre itself. Under the base of the observatory tower , lovers can write their names on locks and attach them to the railings as a symbol of love. To get to Namsan Seoul Tower, tourists can choose between taking a cable car up or the two-kilometre trekking route at Namsan Park, climbing multiple flights of st airs to reach the base of the observatory tower that stands at nearly 480 metres above sea level. Namsan Park is also often visited by nature lovers as it offers picturesque landscapes, botanical gardens, and other exercise facilities.





Ansan Jarak-gil Trail & Mountain

Another less popular but scenic hiking trail available in South Korea is the Ansan Jarak- gil Trail, located in Seodaemun-gu in South Korea. This trail is situated one stop away from the popular Gyeongbokgung (Palace) Station. The Ansan Jarak-gil trail comp rises a 7-kilometre wooden deck trail that wraps around the circumference of the Ansan Mountain. However, many tourists choose to go off-trail to explore other parts of the mountain, such as the Ansan Beacon Mound and the charming views at the mountain peak.

Paektusan

Paektusan , also known as Baekdusan , is located on the border between China and North Korea and is only accessible by charter flight through China for most tourists. It is the tallest mountain in Korea an d features stunning views of the mountain and forest areas from its peak. Tourists can walk up the trail to catch a glimpse of the huge crater lake, Chon , also known as the “Lake of Heaven”. In addition, when travellers walk along the shores of Mount Paektu , they will be able to enjoy hundreds of species of flowers and plant life.







Islands

Jeju-do

Jeju-do is the largest island in South Korea and is known for the Hallasan Mountain, lava tubes, beaches, and theme parks. It has a moderate climate and temperatures that rarely fall below 0 degrees Celsius even in winter. Jeju-do is an alluring holiday destination for both international and domestic tourists alike. Some common attractions on the island include Loveland, an exotic outdoor adult theme park featuring grotesque sculptures of nudes, and the Olle Walking trails, where the hugely popular historical drama “Jewel in the Palace” was filmed.

An average cost for a family vacation to Jeju-do for a week can be somewhere between USD2,984 to USD7,184 for food, sightseeing, and lodging. Tourism revenue is also derived from domestic air travel to Jeju International Airport, which can cost between USD1,009 to USD1,493 per individual for economy flights. With that, tourism profits in Jeju amounted to USD3.74 billion in 2019 alone, making up more than 17% of South Korea’s tourism revenue. Moreover, more than 70% of visitors tend to visit the island more than once, thereby contributing repeatedly to the economy. South Korea’s economy thus relies significantly on the revenue earned from tourism in Jeju-do.

Hallasan Volcano

Standing at 1,950 metres above sea level as the highest mountain in South Korea, Hall asan Volcano and the Lava Tubes dominate the Jeju Volcanic Island, and is recognised as a UNESCO Global Geopark with its well-preserved volcanic landforms. Jeju-do’s distinctive feature also encompasses its ecosystems, and the site is a testament to the history and natural processes of our planet. Being a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, it comprises forests and grasslands, and is home to 103 different animal species, some of which are native breeds. Endangered animals like the steller sea lion and the green sea turtle are also protected here.

Additionally, it is home to many Haenyeo (women divers) who dive 10 meters underwater to fish for seaweed and shellfish without the aid of oxygen masks. Despite some of them being 80 years old, they harvest for a living for up to 7 hours every day, 90 days a year. Visitors can visit the Haenyeo Museum to learn more, or hike up Seongsan Ilchulbong in Seongsan- ri to catch the Haenyeo Women Diver Show, which will allow visitors to experience the job and culture of Haenyeo as it is today. UNESCO has also named this an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Seongsan Ilchulbong

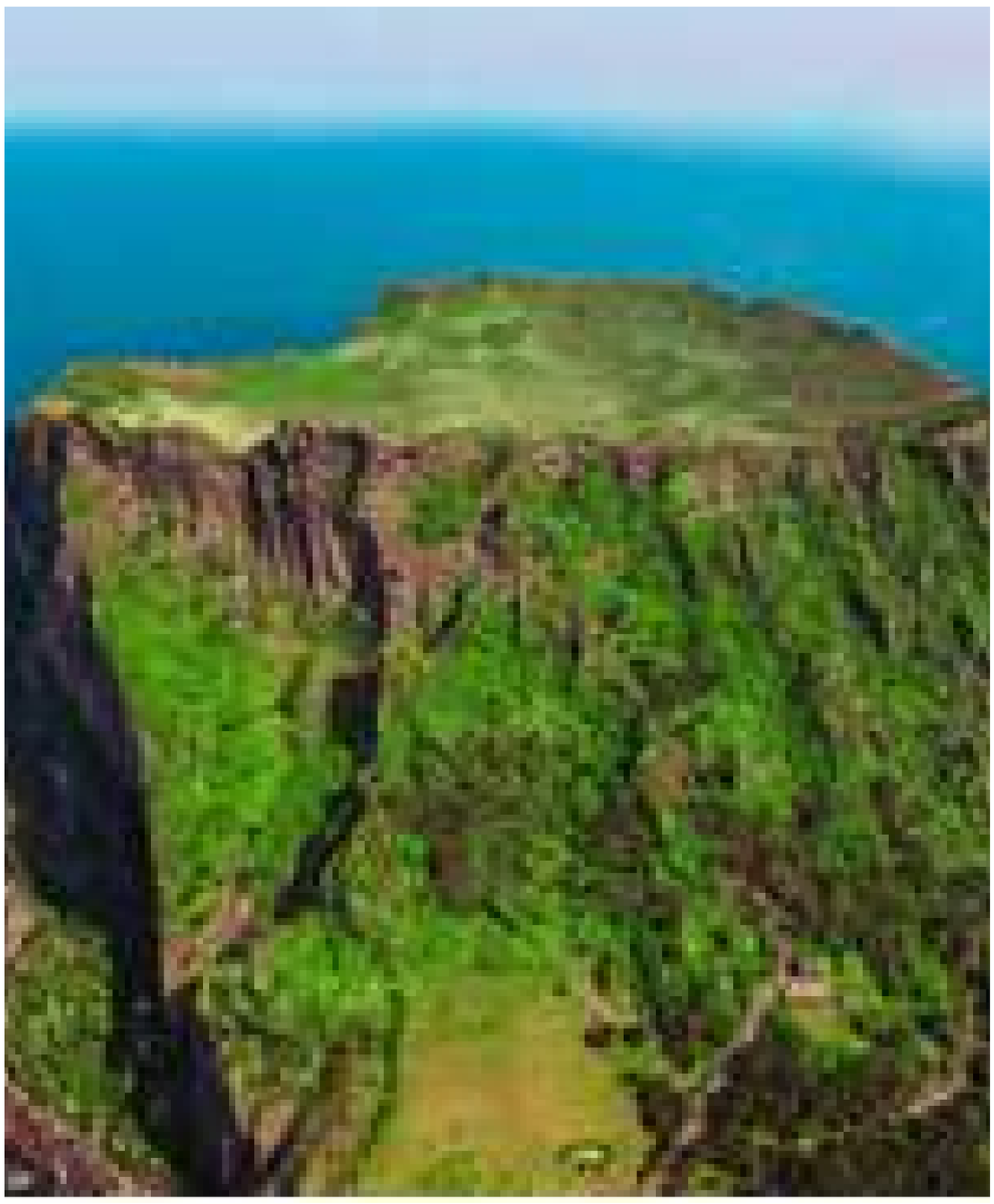
Seongsan Ilchulbong , also known as the “Sunrise Peak”, is a well-known UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its name, meaning “castle hill”, is derived from its sloping shape that resembles a grand castle. It is 377,872 square meters wide and stands 182 metres above sea level. Seongsan Ilchulbong has a lava cone-like structure that was created due to a volcanic eruption that occurred over 5,000 years ago. The 99 various-sized rocks that surround the circumference of the crater gives it a crown-like appearance. The crater is 90 metres deep, and its appearance will vary from season to season.

Tangerine Picking

When in Jeju-do, tangerine picking is another activity that is wildly popular, especially in the winter season. Tangerines are one of the specialties of Jeju-do and are prized for their exquisite taste. The perfect season for tangerine picking is between October and February due to the winter wind. Visitors can pick tangerines to try on the spot or b ring home. These guided tours usually cost around KRW5,000.

O’sulloc Tea Museum

The O’sulloc Tea Museum is a place for tourists to learn about Korea’s deep traditional tea culture and enjoy the scenic views of the natural green tea fields. It is one of the top 10 museums in the world, recognised for its unique architecture and design, as well as the scenery both inside and outside the museum. Therefore, it is one of the most sought-after tourist attractions in Jeju-do visited by over 1.5 million tourists annually. After the museum tour, visitors can also sit down to enjoy the famous gr een tea ice cream, which is known to be the best of its kind in Jeju-do, alongside other desserts unique to the island, such as the hallasan volcano lava cake.









Nami Island

Nami Island, or Namiseom , is another island that contributes largely to the Korean tourism industry. It is Korea's most globally recognised tourist destination and cultural brand welcoming over 3.3 million guests each year. One reason why it is a largely populated tourist destination is becau se it was widely used as a filming location for the hit Korean drama "Winter Sonata" starring Bae Yong- joon and Choi Ji-woo, driving the island's popularity among visitors. Tourists also visit the Gonsaengwon Garden to take souvenir photos with the statues of Bae Yong- joon and Choi Ji-woo. The island is also known for its panoramic scenery which changes with the seasons, such as the Gingko tree lane in spring.

UDO

Udo, an island known for its beautiful scenery and natural sites, is a 15-minute ferry ride away from Jeju-do. Also known as U-Island, it is situated on the northeastern part of Seongsan- ri . Udo translates t o "Cow Island" as the island is said to look like the outline of a cow lying down, or similar to the top of a cow's head. Since the entire island is a lava plateau formed by basaltic lava after going through numerous eruptions, the land is very fertile to grow crops such as sweet potatoes and peanuts. Peanut-flavoured foods are thus very well-liked in Udo. Some examples are peanut ice cream, peanut coffee, peanut noodles, and peanut mandu (Korean dumplings).

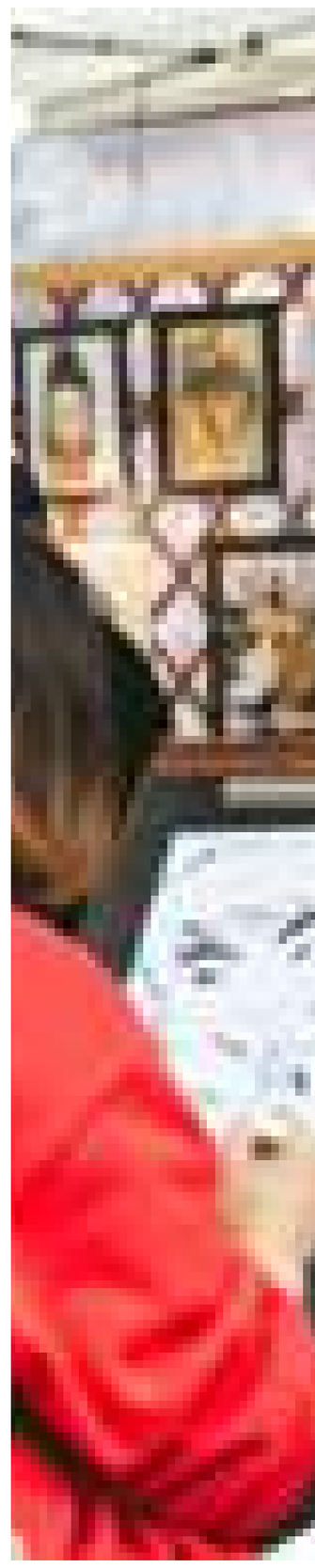
SHOPPING DISTRICTS

South Korea is home to a plethora of shopping districts. Seoul , in particular, is commonly known as a shopper's paradise. Some notable shopping districts that are favoured amongst tourists are Myeongdong , Hongdae, Dongdaemun , and Insadong .

Myeongdong

Myeon gdong Market is renowned for its myriad of cosmetics shops, with shopping lanes peppered with global Korean skincare brands such as Innisfree, Nature Republic, and Etude House, and the Lotte and Shinsegae Departmental Stores. This shopping district is popu lar amongst tourists of all ages and plays host to many international brands, such as ABC Mart, Adidas, and Giordano.





Hongdae

Hongdae, on the other hand, is a more youth-centric dis trict and sells more affordable clothing targeted at the younger generation of South Koreans. It is known for its urban arts culture as the neighbourhood was built on a foundation of artistic souls since 1990, under the influence of the prestigious arts co llege, Hongik University, which is located nearby. Many street dancers and local musicians of all ages busk and/or perform along Hongdae, thus maintaining Hongdae's culture of urban arts. Numerous street artists also enjoy painting and displaying their art work along Hongdae, especially in an alley called Hongdae Mural Street. Tourists can purchase unique artwork from artists and request for song dedications from musicians along the streets.





Dongdaemun

Dongdaemun is another one of South Korea's shopping paradise, featuring different ranges of products - from cheap imitation goods to luxurious brands. Thrift shopping is rather common in Dongdaemun and tourists will be able to obtain vintage clothing from these thrift shops at lower prices. Affordable clothes and trinkets can be found in Dongdaemun Shopping Complex, while more modern retail stores are located in Dongdaemun Design Plaza, a neo-futuristic building that is hard for tourists to miss.

Insadong

The shops and stores in Insadong , on the other hand, primarily sell traditional Korean goods and antiques. There ar e also other shops that sell pottery and souvenirs, thus making it a popular place amongst tourists. Insadong has a long history as a market area and is considered to be a place where the past meets the present. Aside from the historical buildings and temp les, street food is also very popular in Insadong .

ENTERTAINMENT &NIGHTLIFE

Besides shopping and visiting historical sights, South Korea also offers different kinds of entertainment to tourists. Couples can visit theme parks and beaches with their children while young adults can patronise clubs and bars, attend concerts and visit karaoke joints.

Theme Parks

South Korea plays host to a variety of theme parks, such as Lotte World, Gyeongju World, and Vivaldi Park. These theme parks help to contribute to the South Korean economy through ticket sales, merchandise purchases, as well as hotel bookings. They also cater to locals and tourists of all ages.

Lotte World

Lotte Group operates the Lotte World theme park, which is a family-friendly theme park that offers both entertainment and sightseeing attractions. It is also the largest indoor amusement park in the world. Aside from thrilling rides and exciting performanc es, Lotte World also offers other amenities, such as a shopping mall, museum, ice rink, and hotel. One favourite attraction within Lotte World would be Lotte World Star Avenue, where tourists can see the handprints of their favourite K-Pop artists and take pictures with them at the interactive screens.

Gyeongju World Amusement Park

Gyeongju World Amusement Park is also another notable theme park, being the largest one in the southern area of South Korea. Gyeongju World's mos t visited zone is the X-Zone, which features exciting thrill rides, such as the Draken , Tornado, and Submarine Smash. Gyeongju World also promotes child-friendly rides in the Wizard Garden and California Beach. California Beach only operates in summer; In winter, it turns into a big ice sledding site. The abundance of thrilling rides, restaurants, and other available facilities, makes Gyeongju World a tourist destination in high demand.

Vivaldi Park

Vivaldi Park is another famous destination amongst tourists. Located on the slopes of Palbongsan Mountain in the Hongcheon region of Gangwon-do, its attractions are seasonal - Vivaldi Park Ocean World operates in sum mer while Vivaldi Park Ski World operates in winter. Vivaldi Park Ocean World was constructed and designed to resemble an oasis in the middle of a desert, with the intention of giving tourists the impression and experience of having a refreshing swim under the sweltering heat. It also features a large sphinx and pyramid that further contributes to the desert theme. Ocean World comprises both indoor and outdoor pool areas, as well as a lake park. It is also a thrill-seeker's haven, as it consists of many act ion-packed and stimulating rides. Some examples include the 300-metre long Extreme River, Family Raft Slide, and Spa Village.

Vivaldi Park Ski Resort, on the other hand, contin uously attracts winter sports lovers by offering one-day skiing and nighttime skiing options to tourists and visitors. The ski resort boasts 12 ski slopes for visitors of all experience levels and is also connected to the condominiums, providing easier acc ess for visitors as well. Tourists can also opt to book lessons with ski or snowboarding instructors if they are beginners to the sport. The revenue earned from both Vivaldi Park Ocean World and Ski Resort is substantial during the appropriate seasons and are critical in attracting tourists to South Korea.











Bars & Clubs

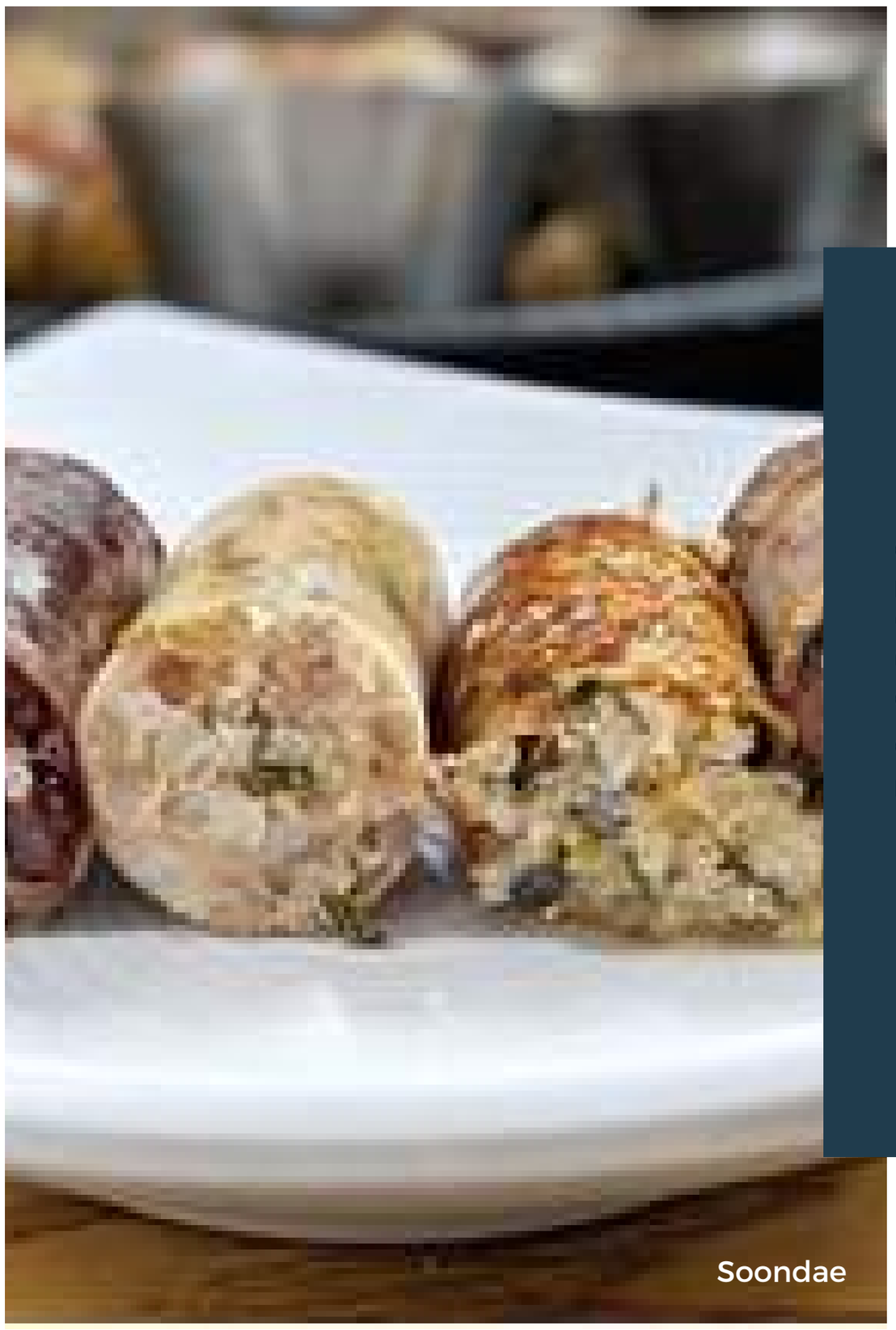
To pander to tourists on the younger side, South Korea's impressive display of bars and clubs is highly populated by tourists and locals. Most of South Korea's clubs are located in Gangnam and Hongdae as those districts are typically more popular amongst t he youths and young adults. For example, Octagon Club, essentially the Zouk (local club in Singapore) of South Korea, is promoted as the best club in Gangnam and ranked among the top 10 in the world. The two-storey club contains three bars, private mezzani ne VIP bunkers, and a swimming pool, attracting many celebrities and tourists. Besides Octagon Club, COCOON is also one of the more prominent and bigger clubs in Hongdae, being extremely in-demand amongst young adults in their twenties. COCOON's popularity stems from its free entrance on weekdays (around 9-10 PM) and its electronic music selection.

Food

When visiting South Korea, there are several significant dishes that the locals classify as ‘must- trys ’. Though some are found in other places, tourists still flock to South Korea for the authentic experience where the dishes originated from.



Ddukbokki



Soondae

FOODIES

Street Food

South Korea has its own unique version of street food which are sold by street vendors, also known as pojangmacha. These include Ddukbokki, Soondae and Hoeddeok. Ddukbokki, also known as tteokbokki, is a spicy Korean food that is made of cylindrical rice cakes, fishcakes, vegetables, and gochujang, which is a sweet red chilli sauce fundamental to Korean cooking. Tteokbokki translates to ‘stir-fried rice cake’ and has become a common source of comfort food.

Another common street food is Soondae , traditional blood sausage. It usually consists of rice, dangmyeon - which is glass noodles made of sweet potatoes - and pig’s blood. Other variations include barley, bean sprouts, kimchi, or scallions. In other regions, they may include squid or fish as well. Although the versions differ in fillings and wrappings, they are generally chewy on the outside, and soft and flavourful on the inside. Soondae tends to be incorporated into various dishes, such as soondaeguk soup or soondae bokkeum stir fry.

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Traditional Dishes

Apart from street food, South Korea has a number of traditional and signature dishes that are common even in Singapore. These are dishes that can be found on almost every menu in South Korea. One of the more timeless dishes is kimchi, a spicy and sour dish of fermented vegetables. The components tend to vary by season and region, but common ingredients include vegetables such as cabbage and carrots. The dish is well-liked by many foreigners due to its unique flavour and high nutritional value. On the other hand, for Koreans, it holds cultural significance, and meals are usually considered incomplete without it.
Another traditional dish would be japchae. When translated, japchae means ‘mixed vegetables. The dish includes dangmyeon, different thinly-shredded vegetables, and seasoned meat. It is usually more popular during Korean festive seasons, such as New Year’s Day and Korea’s Harvest festival.

Bibimbap is another common dish, consisting of a bowl of rice with different ingredients - usually mushrooms, beef, a fried egg, and namul, a term describing seasoned and sautéed vegetables. Another major part of the dish is gochujang, a chilli pepper paste, which completes the flavours of the dish. There are variations to the dish according to different regions but the more famous versions originate from Jeonju, Tongyeong, and Jinju.

Lastly, bulgogi, marinated beef barbecue, is a crowd-pleasing dish that is usually eaten when having Korean barbecue. Korean barbecue, known as gogi-gui in Korea, is the famous method of grilling different kinds of meat, such as beef, chicken, and/or pork. The meat is often cooked over gas flames or charcoal grills that are built into the dining table.

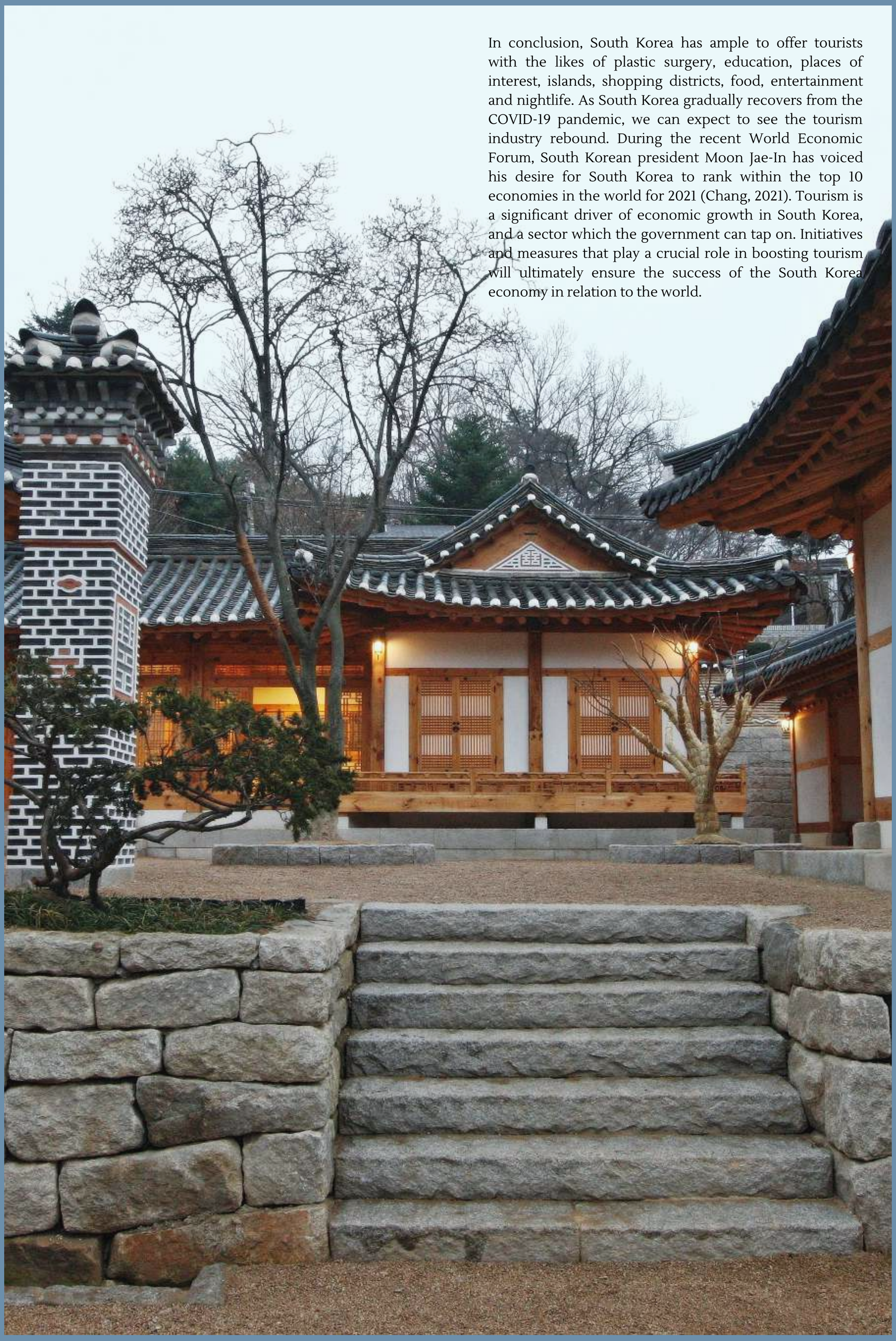
Unique dishes

Other local dishes to try when visiting South Korea include san- nakji and haemul pajeon. San- nakji is a salty, sticky, and chewy dish that consists of raw ba by octopus. It is chopped and served with sesame seeds and oil. Due to the unique nervous system of the octopus, some of the pieces still move and twitch when served. It is known to go well with green tea and ssamjang , a spicy and salty dipping sauce. The most well-known place to try the dish is widely known to be at the Noryangjin fish market located in Seoul.

In addition, haemul pajeon is a delectable Korean savoury pancake made with scallions and seafood. There are other variati ons of the pancake, whereby other ingredients, such as kimchi, garlic, and/or chives are used. Ultimately, the seafood (haemul) version of the pancake still stands as the most well-liked variation. It is generally eaten as a main dish and is known for its soft chewy texture as well as its mixture of seafood flavours.

San-nakji

In conclusion, South Korea has ample to offer tourists with the likes of plastic surgery, education, places of interest, islands, shopping districts, food, entertainment and nightlife. As South Korea gradually recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, we can expect to see the tourism industry rebound. During the recent World Economic Forum, South Korean president Moon Jae-In has voiced his desire for South Korea to rank within the top 10 economies in the world for 2021 (Chang, 2021). Tourism is a significant driver of economic growth in South Korea, and a sector which the government can tap on. Initiatives and measures that play a crucial role in boosting tourism will ultimately ensure the success of the South Korea economy in relation to the world.



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MULTICULTURALISM &DIVERSITY IN SOUTH KOREA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report investigates South Korea's attitudes towards Multiculturalism and its approach towards embracing diversity in its country.

South Korea has traditionally been known for its ethnically, culturally and linguistically homogeneous society. However in recent times, the sentiments towards multiculturalism have shifted towards a more multicultural Korea for varying reasons. While Koreans understand the need for foreigners, there is underlying resistance towards full acceptance of foreigners into their country. Koreans embrace foreigners, but they do not embrace them fully.
Furthermore, xenophobic attitudes can still be seen to be prevalent in the country's policies. Most recently, mandatory testing for COVID-19 was implemented for foreigners residing in the country, which brought up concerns regarding the stigma that South Korea still retains towards foreigners in the 21st century.

In addition, performances of blackface and discriminatory language still continue to appear on South Korean television, thereby sparking concerns over the ignorance and racial insensitivity showcased on public broadcast. Although South Korea has appeared to embrace diversity in different facets of their society, such as the Korean Pop industry, it falls short of recognising cultural sensitivities. This is manifested through the numerous instances whereby cultures are often exploited for entertainment value, thereby representing cultural codes inappropriately at the expense of other cultures.

By analysing representations of diversity, we posit that the South Korean society falls short of accurately addressing and recognising its diverse makeup of foreigners through its discriminatory practices that fail to affirm the very cultural diversity that it seeks to uphold.

BACKGROUND AND EVOLUTION OF MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

Multiculturalism is defined as the presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society (Oxford, 2021).

This initial section of the paper will elaborate the beginnings and reasons for the evolution of multiculturalism in South Korea. It will be followed up with statistics to show this evolution and the make-up of foreign residents residing in South Korea today. To end the section, we examine past and present sentiments towards the topic of multiculturalism in South Korea and its evolution in the eyes of Koreans.

BACKGROUND OF SOUTH KOREA

Traditionally, South Korea is a country that takes much pride in being an ethnically, culturally and linguistically homogeneous society. For Koreans, being Korean means being mono-cultural, mono-ethnic, and mono-lingual. As a result, this mindset has developed and evolved into their common national identity – also known as “Koreanness”. “Koreanness" acts as a symbol of Korean pride, independence, freedom, and togetherness. This is in relation to the sufferings that many Koreans (especially those of the older generations) faced or are still undergoing due to the aftermaths and nightmares from 35 years of colonization by Japan and the Korean war that divided the country by agreement between the external forces including the United States and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Kim & So, 2018).

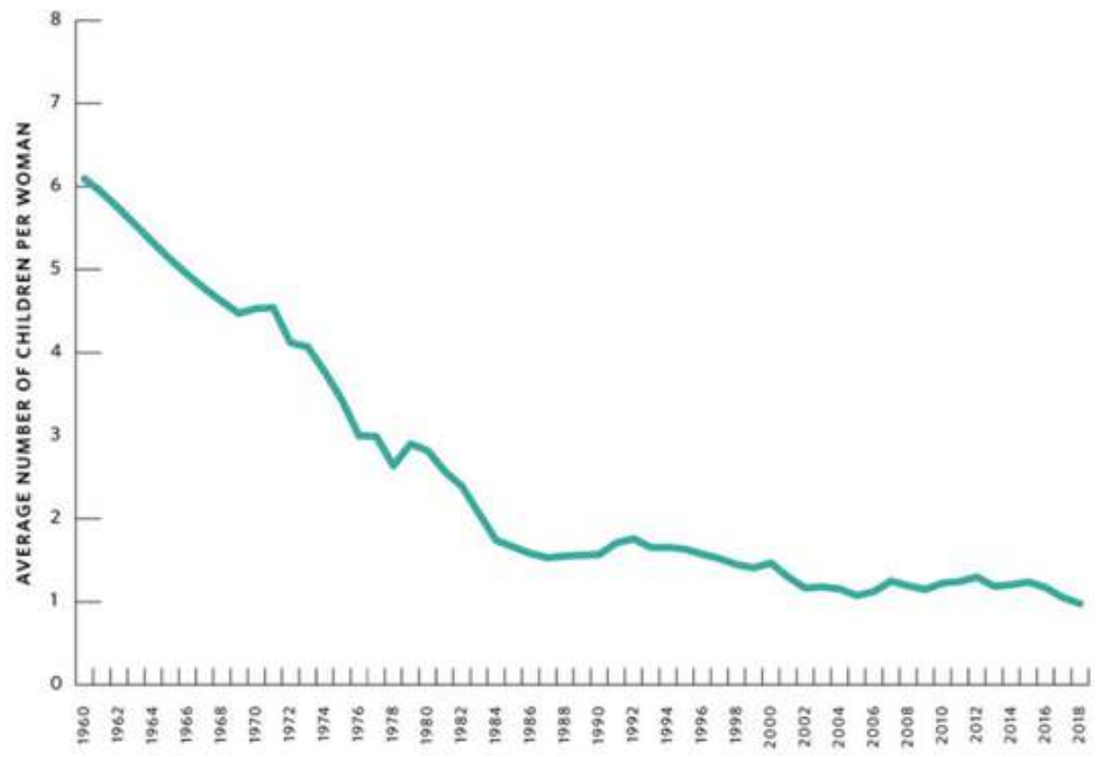
Likewise, this spirit of “Koreanness” or Korean nationalism has been portrayed and effective as an ideological tool used by subsequent Korean governments for enhancing social cohesion and advancing economic development during the 1980s to 2000s (Hong & Halvorsen, 2014). This effectiveness can be seen from Koreans traditionally favouring their own countrymen in work or in their respective communities and neighbourhoods, and while doing so excluding foreign members into their community. This has thus led to many Koreans not being able to interact with foreigners which prevents them from developing embracing attitudes towards foreigners and immigrants as part of their society (Hong & Halvorsen, 2014).

EVOLUTION OF MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

The change of sentiments towards foreigners residing and working in South Korea came in the early 2000s. This change in attitude was not made by choice, but mostly by circumstance. There were a cumulation of factors that forced the Korean government to undertake various multicultural policy changes to introduce the concept of multiculturalism within South Korea. These policy changes emphasized and put focus for the general population to become more “aware” and “understanding” of immigrants and multiculturalism as a whole (Olneck, 2011). The goal was to improve the “intercultural sensitivity of the Korean public and reduce prejudice and discrimination against foreign brides and their children” (Oh et al., 2011).

These factors include native Koreans not willing to perform 3-D (difficult, dirty and dangerous) unskilled manual jobs, and South Korea’s slowing fertility rate coupled with the rising average life expectancy of the country. These demographic factors were foreshadowing huge labour shortages for the Korean economy that are critically important for future economic growth.

Since the early to mid-1980s, South Korea’s fertility rate has remained below 2.1 children per woman (Figure 1). 2.1 is the traditional replacement rate that the United Nations (UN) suggests to allow for one generation to fully replace the previous generation without migration (Im, 2020). This is in line with declining birth rates in developed countries worldwide due to associated issues of high costs of living and struggles of raising children in today’s ultra-competitive climate.



In addition to the declining fertility rate, enhanced medical technologies and operations have raised the average life expectancy of a South Korean from sixty-six years old to eighty-two years old over that same period (Im, 2020).

While these two phenomena happened simultaneously in the 1980s, it became apparent to the Korean government that they needed to act quickly then to make up for the ageing population and labour shortages that they were forecasted to face in the 21st century.

Fast forward to the early 2000s, the education system of Korea has also vastly improved. All children from ages six to 15 have to attend compulsory primary and secondary education in South Korea. Consolidated statistics also indicate a 95% completion rate for these two education levels. This translates into a generally educated generation of job seekers who prefer not to perform 3-D unskilled manual labour jobs like construction work, factory labour and cleaning (Kim, 2009).

To address the above mentioned factors, the government took a two-prong approach that ultimately introduced multiculturalism in South Korea.

The first step was to convince its people of the need for multiculturalism. They promoted multiculturalism as a national agenda by liberalizing immigration policies and introduced a “Plan for Promoting the Social Integration of Migrant Women, Biracial People, and Immigrants” in a bid to change pre-conceived mindsets and attitudes towards foreigners in South Korea (Ahn, 2012). This plan also sought to draw appeal and invite migrant workers, foreign spouses and international students to reside and assimilate within South Korea.

Secondly, as South Korea portrayed itself to be inviting of foreigners, it expanded its source of migrant workers from China, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines to other countries such as Russia, Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, Brazil and Nigeria (Kim, 2009). At the same time, the Korean government also encouraged the influx of foreign brides to marry men living in rural areas in a bid to raise overall fertility rates for the country (Kim, 2009).

This two-prong approach directly and successfully increased the number of foreign residents residing in South Korea. Consequently, it has led to a shift from the mono-culturalist society that South Korea prided itself to be for decades to become the diverse and multiculturalist society that its government envisioned the future of South Korea to be.

FOREIGN RESIDENTS IN SOUTH KOREA

Foreign residents in South Korea include persons who do not have South Korean nationality, foreign workers, marriage migrants, naturalized South Korean citizens as well as children of foreign residents.

Based on South Korean nationality law, North Korean citizens are considered South Korean citizens by birth. Defectors are hence not included in the foreign resident statistic and are entitled to full citizen benefits.
South Korea's total population is 51.7 million. As of November 2019, the number of foreign residents residing in South Korea is just over 2.5 million (4.83% of total population) (Yonhap, 2020).

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a nation is classified as a multicultural and multiracial society if its percentage of foreign residents exceeds 5% of its total population. This brings to attention the figure that South Korea currently has and how it is on the verge of being classified as a multicultural and multiracial society since this number has been increasing year-on-year.

In 2009, the number of foreign residents was reported to be 1 million. End 2018, this number more than doubled to be just upwards of 2 million people. One year later, it has again followed the trend and risen to a respectable figure of 2.5 million. In no time, South Korea will exceed that 5% threshold and be officially labelled as a multicultural and multiracial society among academic bodies worldwide.

Amongst this figure of 2.5 million people, the largest group constitute persons who do not have South Korean nationality, foreign workers, and marriage migrants (~80%). This is followed by children of foreign residents (~11%) and lastly the smallest group being naturalized South Korean citizens (~8%).

By nationality, the composition break-down is as follows: Chinese nationals (43.6%), Vietnamese (8.9%), Thais (8.3%), Americans (6.2%), and others. As explained earlier, this diverse make-up of the foreign resident population in South Korea is mainly due to the fulfilment of 3-D jobs as well as inviting foreign brides to start a family in South Korea.

Definitely, there are also other reasons for foreigners to reside in South Korea such as hiring of foreign talents or students arriving in South Korea for further / international studies.

In terms of where these foreign residents mostly reside in, Gyeonggi Province holds the largest foreign population of 414,318 (16.4%) followed by Seoul with 281,876 (11.1%) people. The rest of the population is scattered around other provinces or cities across the country. Understandably, Seoul houses a sizable number of the foreign resident population being the capital of South Korea. There are jobs available for the people living there and famous universities for students to study at.

On the other hand, Gyeonggi Province being the most popular option for foreign residents stem from its location being near to Seoul. Gyeonggi Province is the area surrounding Seoul. Essentially, those who have jobs in the capital but would like to enjoy a lower cost of living would choose Gyeonggi Province to be their venue for accommodation. They will be able to travel to-and-fro work while paying less in terms of rent and amenities as compared to charges within the metropolitan capital city.



SENTIMENTS TOWARDS MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

Traditional sentiments towards multiculturalism in South Korea were unwelcoming. Social identity theory posits that immigrants are commonly viewed as cultural threats to the positive status of a country's symbolic establishments as well as to the maintenance of its ethnic and cultural cohesiveness, whereas realistic conflict theory emphasizes strained social relations due to increased competition for limited resources with material threats being the primary concern (Cho, 2020). Indeed, this is exacerbated by the fact that South Koreans take immense pride in their ethnically, culturally, and linguistically homogeneous society.

However, this mindset has changed ever so slightly in modern times. Koreans today are indeed more willing to accept foreigners into their country as they understand the changing dynamics and demands of today's globalized world. For Korea to remain competitive and relevant on the global stage (e.g. invitation as members of international bodies), there needs to be movement of people whether for work, study or marriage.

Unfortunately, there is still a tinge of "Koreanness" within them that does not allow them to fully embrace diversity in their society. By being Korean, they see foreign residents as a threat to the sustainability of their culture (Kim & So, 2018). While foreign residents still constitute a small portion of their population, they can be "Othered" by the majority of Koreans knowing that the mix and influence of other cultures are still being controlled. However, Koreans remain worried that deeper connections and interactions with these foreign residents would eventually lead to an unrecognizable mix of cultures and the diminishment of their dominant "Koreanness" in their own motherland.

The risks of a multicultural society are made more visible in recent times when problems such as intensified job competition, marriage fraud, cultural clashes and violent crimes are linked with the presence of an immigrant (Cho, 2020).

Preference Towards Multiculturalism	2010	2015	2020
Monoethnic, monocultural country	37.1%	38.7%	39.1%
Multiethnic, multicultural country	60.6%	49.6%	44.4%
I don't know	2.4%	11.7%	13.1%

Figure 2 is an excerpt of survey results submitted by Koreans over a time period of 10 years that ask questions regarding their preference towards multiculturalism in South Korea. The results show a decrease in the number of people preferring a multiethnic, multicultural country, but those wanting a monoethnic, monocultural country remain relatively unchanged.

An explanation for the decrease in preference for a multiethnic and multicultural country is due to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Korea had been hit hard by the financial crisis that led to thousands losing their jobs. As job places were reduced, job competition intensified even more and typical sentiments would be to blame foreigners for taking their jobs.

However, what remains striking is that the number of 'I don't knows' have increased by 10% over 10 years. This suggests the dilemma that Koreans have regarding accepting the opportunities and threats that foreign residents bring to South Korea.

As a whole, Koreans today tend to display growing acceptance and tolerance on issues relating to the cultural benefits of multiculturalism and international marriages, yet their attitudes are becoming more exclusionary on matters that pose real economic threats to natives such as jobs, benefits, and social services (Cho, 2020).

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SOUTH KOREA TODAY

Strict Immigration Policies

Foreign workers are typically brought into Korea through the Employment Permit System (EPS) to work in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in industries such as agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and construction amidst other blue-collar sectors (Stokes, 2021). Many of these positions are labelled by South Koreans as the 3Ds - dirty, dangerous and demeaning. Such work is often shunned upon by Koreans, who are influenced by societal and educational norms to now pursue prestigious and elite job positions. Therefore, the South Korean government has to rely on foreign workers to fill in the gaps in job skills. However, stringent rules accompanying the EPS system makes foreign workers vulnerable to exploitation. For instance, foreign workers can only renew their visas for generally 3 years before they will have to leave the country, and are not allowed to bring any family members with them to Korea. Their work visas are also tied to their employers, thereby restricting any possibility of job hopping during their stay in Korea. These conditions make it even tougher for migrants to settle into a new culture.

Challenges Foreigners Face in South Korea

Due to South Koreans' perception of "Koreanness" stemming from entrenched beliefs of maintaining its identity as an ethnically homogenous society, foreigners often face tumultuous challenges when living in Korea. Since Korean residents do not perceive foreigners to be a part of the society, immigrants are often faced with acts of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. On top of that, they are also faced with communication barriers due to language differences, as well as cultural differences and loneliness (Kang, 2013).

What Has Been Done Thus Far?

In response to the growing population of foreign residents in Korea, the authorities have implemented some useful facilities to provide support for foreign residents. For one, "Global Centres" and Multicultural Family Support Centres (MFSCs) have been built across the country, serving as support centres to aid foreign residents in daily living, business activities, educational courses and international exchange events. Information desks are also set up at popular spots frequented by migrants to assist in providing information. These facilities are usually catered to the needs of the immigrant population in Korea, consisting of spouses, investors, migrant workers and tourists (The Diplomat, 2014). MFCS serves as a crucial community-based pillar to support migrants' integration into the Korean society and forms a bridge between the government in promoting family and community harmony (Dicolen & Sanchez, 2016).

Additionally, foreigners are also increasingly being represented through media forms, with more entertainment programmes featuring more diversity in Korea. This aspect will be discussed in greater depth later in the report.

HOW COVID-19 IS TESTING MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, South Korea has been marginalising its immigrant residents as a response to combat the pandemic within the country. Firstly, South Korea has been introducing cash payouts to Korean citizens to relieve the economic fallouts attributed to the prolonged pandemic. However, foreign residents have been largely excluded from receiving such economic aid from the government, who do so by enforcing stricter eligibility criterias for receiving the funds (Ock, 2020b). These have been carried out in regions such as Gyeonggi and Seoul, both of which have a large proportion of foreign residents. With many immigrants working in low-paying jobs in South Korea, not having access to relief funds will not only leave them to be more economically vulnerable, but also heightening the risk of losing their source of income in a foreign country (Im, 2020).

Additionally, Gyeonggi province and Seoul has mandated Covid-19 testing for all foreigners or be subjected to a fine, given that the regions are heavily populated with immigrant workers (Sharma, 2021). There are also stringent deportation regulations put in place if foreigners are caught violating quarantine measures. This comes as a response to the growing of Covid-19 cases in South Korea, raising concerns that foreigners living in Korea are facing greater discrimination after the pandemic since the individuals infected with the coronavirus were increasingly seen as coming rom abroad (Im, 2020).

While some immigrants were in favour of the testing regime as they perceived this move as the government trying to protect its residents from the outbreak, many otherwise felt that the order felt xenophobic and discriminatory as they were labelled as scapegoats, framed for the rising of Covid-19 cases in Korea. Ultimately, Seoul has put an end to the mandatory testing on foreigners after complaints and criticism from South Korean lawmakers, university officials and foreign ambassadors (The Straits Times, 2021).

Other regulations that South Korea has put in place include the revision of national law so that foreigners have to fork out their own costs for treating Covid-19-related illnesses if they have knowingly travelled to Korea while infectious (Im, 2020), as well as the government's "discriminative perception" where foreigners are not covered by the national health insurance plan and are excluded from the country's mask rationing system (Ock, 2020a).

The Covid-19 pandemic therefore poses a greater hurdle for South Korea to overcome in its journey to multiculturalism, especially because the country is already grappling with challenges to accept foreigners into the society before the pandemic. The pandemic will further show Koreans how crucial it is to progress the country into a multicultural society, given that the country is highly reliant on foreign labour to boost its economy.



CHINA-KOREA CULTURAL TENSIONS



Even though Chinese immigrants make up the largest proportion of foreign residents in South Korea, conflicts between Koreans and Chinese citizens have been increasingly common in recent years. Such tensions and controversies often stem from history and traditions, given that both countries share deep historical and commercial ties. Recently, the kimchi controversy has sparked fierce debates between both countries, with each claiming ownership of the traditional culture that has been passed down through generations. While Koreans recognise kimchi, the fermented cabbage dish, as an essential part of the Korean diet, Chinese citizens claim that they have every right to claim the dish as the majority of the kimchi consumed in South Korea was imported from China (McCurry, 2020). Such culture wars have been aggravated by social media, allowing citizens from both countries to directly interact with each other and defend their own cultures. China's strong media control and support from officials also seem to suggest that China is encouraging such engagement in conflicts with South Korea (Stangarone, 2020).

The kimchi controversy is only one of the many other cultural conflicts that South Korea engages with China, which include South Korean traditional clothing hanbok and other controversies stemming from history and politics.

These controversial debates provide a deeper insight into how South Koreans perceive China and its citizens. As of 2016, 60 percent or more of South Koreans have had unfavourable views of China, and the numbers are expected to grow in 2020. Ultimately, such culture wars will not be beneficial for both countries, as public support in the democratic South Korea for improving relations with China will be weakened (Stangarone, 2020).

Moreover, the pandemic has further strengthened anti-chinese sentiment, as many Korean citizens begin to blame the spread of the coronavirus on Chinese foreign residents living in Korea. There have been petitions signed to the presidential Blue House calling for a total ban of Chinese residents, while restaurants and shops have reportedly been posting signs saying 'No Chinese allowed' and refusing to accept Chinese customers (Kasulis, 2020).
Such examples are proof that South Korea is still far from becoming a multicultural society, as inherent prejudice against its immigrant residents, such as the Chinese for instance, is still deeply ingrained in many South Koreans. A lot more time will be needed for Korean residents to come to terms of accepting foreigners into their midst within the society.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTH KOREA

In the era of globalisation, it is unsurprising to notice the increasingly diverse line-up featured on mass media. With the number of foreign residents residing in South Korea totaling over 2.5 million (Yonhap, 2020), this thus marks the country's gravitation towards being labelled as a multicultural society. Logically, this gradual spike in foreigners would also translate into the fervent desire to observe greater representation of diversity on broadcast channels.

Foreign Representation on South Korean Television

In fact, one such example of foreign representation on public broadcast channels would be the South Korean television series, My Neighbour, Charles, which has been on air since January 6, 2015. The programme premieres on KBS1TV, which is a subsidiary under the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and focuses on infotainment, namely current affairs, news and programmes containing cultural and documentary elements. According to its programme synopsis, My Neighbour, Charles vividly captures the "loneliness, conflicts, and worries foreigners feel while living in Korean society". In doing so, the programme boasts a wide array of foreign nationalities, with three different guests showcasing their various lifestyles every week. Also, My Neighbour, Charles' slogan, "Leave or Stay", is particularly striking for the phrase accurately sums up the subject matter of the show. The programme sheds light on the complexity of struggles faced by a wide array of foreigners from across the globe, detailing how they face several challenges in transitioning from living overseas to relocating in South Korea.

Apart from My Neighbour, Charles, Non Summit is also another programme that features a multinational lineup. Broadcasted on Joongang Tongyang Broadcasting Company (JTBC), Non Summit consists of a panel of foreigners who live in South Korea who come together to debate on different issues and Korean culture. Through the eyes of a foreigner, the panel offers interesting insights from different points of view since its cast consists of a diverse lineup with varying professions (Figure 3).

Name	**Nationality**	**Profession**
James Hooper	British	National Geographic explorer and mountain climber
Guillaume Patry	Canadian	Professional StarCraft pro-gamer
Takuya Terada	Japanese	Model and member of K-pop multi-national group Cross Gene
Alberto Mondi	Italian	Fiat foreign car dealer
Zhang Yuan	Chinese	Television announcer
Tyler Rasch	American	Scholar at Seoul National University

Portrayal of Blackface on South Korean Television

Whilst the above-mentioned programmes are examples of attempts to showcase foreign representation on public broadcast, such existing efforts are clearly insufficient as they are undermined by the grossly inappropriate racial prejudice that still persist in the mass media. In particular, black caricatures are often showcased, with the intent of utilising mockery as a means to generate amusement and entertainment. By extension, instances of blackface blatantly exhibit ignorance and racial insensitivity, further exacerbated by the glossing over of the gravity of racist behaviour.

As Eric Lott notes, blackface minstrelsy first appeared as a 19th century theatrical practice, whereby white men caricatured blacks for sport and profit. The act characterised the white Americans' disdain for Afro-Americans, resting upon the material relations of slavery at that time by seemingly projecting that slavery was amusing and natural (Lott, 2013). For Han Gil-Soo, performances of blackface in South Korea only serve to ridicule and legitimise negative perceptions of the Afro-Americans (Han, 2014). More importantly, blackface is showcased in instances to provoke amusement, in a bid to provide entertainment through ridicule. One such example would be the blatantly racist skit that appeared on Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS)'s comedy show, People Looking For Laughter, in 2017. What transpired was that comedian Hong Hyun Hee coloured her face black and dressed up in what appeared to be African tribal dress with a cheetah-print top and a skirt made of cabbage. In doing so, the skit made crude jokes about her appearance and gave the impression of disparaging people of color (The Korea Herald, 2017). Not only did this spark huge outrage regarding the offensive act, but the controversial segment also raised concerns over the broadcaster's decision to air such content without properly reviewing its nature.

Furthermore, such blatant acts of racist representations on public broadcast are even more grave considering how it was reported that the Korea Communication Standards Commission (KCSC) released language use guidelines for all broadcasters in 2015, stipulating that "expressions that promote prejudice against, or mock or insult individuals on the basis of gender, age, education level, disabilities, regional origin, socioeconomic status and race must be refrained from" (The Korea Herald, 2015). Although nine Korean broadcasters, including the three largest networks, Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) and Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), pledged not to utilise discriminatory language in their programmes, especially with regards to women, racial or ethnic minorities, it is clear that several gross violations still recur.

Discriminatory Language Utilised in South Korean Television

Notably, on his visit to South Korea in 2014, the UN Special Rapporteur on racism, Mutuma Ruteere also commented on the urgent need for the South Korean government to ensure that the media is sensitive and conscious of the responsibility to avoid racist and xeniphobic stereotypes and that perpetrators are punished appropriately (United Nation News, 2014). This astutely points out the media's crucial role in reinforcing and shaping negative stereotypes, thereby strongly pressuring the media to be more aware of the significant influence it wields. According to local activist Jung Hye Sil, the Korean media unnecessarily differentiates between multiracial children and children of foreign-born immigrants who are not ethnically Korean (The Korea Herald, 2015). In doing so, such divisive discourse of ethnic homogeneity only results in discrimination, exacerbating social exclusion through upholding the notion of 'pure blood'. By perceiving them as threats to Korea's "pure bloodlines", such discriminatory terms of labelling ironically undermines South Korea's approach in embracing multiculturalism.

In fact, internalised white supremacy is widely observed in South Korean television shows as well, where Caucasians are lauded over other foreign ethnicities. Heo Young Sook from Women Migrants Human Rights Center for Korea asserts that the families of Korean persons married to Caucasian citizens of a Western country are referred to as "global families" by hosts on television shows. This positive connotation is strikingly juxtaposed to the term utilised when a Korean man marries a woman from a Southeast Asian country. Contrastingly, their families are labelled "multicultural families" (The Korea Herald, 2015). By adopting different terms to categorise the nature of these families based on the ethnicities of their spouse, this undoubtedly points to the stigmatization and discrimination amongst Korean society that still distinguishes between foreign ethnicities, based on racial classifications.

As such, it is unsurprising to note Kim Sookyung's argument that for South Korea, "racial prejudice becomes more disguised under the cliché of political correctness, such as the rhetoric of multiculturalism and diversity" (Kim, 2012). Whilst there is public outcry at the absurdity of racist acts performed, more can be done to educate and influence mindsets, in order to prevent other instances from happening. In order to fully embrace multiculturalism and diversity, the South Korean media must treat racism seriously, displaying sensitivities accordingly through representing foreign ethnicities with equal respect.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN SOUTH KOREA

As South Korea progresses towards a multicultural society, there is an increasing trend of acceptance towards other cultures. However, with this rise in diversity, many misunderstandings might follow. Without proper education and understanding, the negative aspects of multiculturalism include growing negative sentiments among the general public. In this final segment, we will introduce one such problem – cultural appropriation of other minority cultures, as well as discuss the implications on multiculturalism in South Korea.

Background of Cultural Appropriation

It is not easy to define cultural appropriation and there are several definitions by scholars. Most simply, cultural appropriation is defined by Oxford dictionary as the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society (Oxford, 2021). In other definitions, American actress Amandla Stenberg described cultural appropriation as an occurrence when "the appropriator is not aware of the deep significance of the culture they are partaking in" (Don't Cash Crop On My Cornrows, 2015). There is generally a negative connotation to the concept because of the lack of credit or understanding to the original culture. In simple terms, cultural appropriation occurs when an individual or group of people adopt something that is not part of their own culture, including and not limited to: art, dance, music, fashion, religious symbols, decoration and hairstyles.

Often misinterpreted with cultural appreciation, there is also a thin line separating the two concepts. Cultural appreciation is seeking to understand a culture's significance and value, whereas appropriation undermines it. While appropriation usually carries a critical tone, appreciation is celebrated because it acknowledges the origins of other cultures.

Cultural Appropriation in Korean Context

Korean wiki site Namuwiki lists cultural appropriation mainly as munhwajok jonnyu (문화적 전유), as well as several other translations. It defines the concept as the unauthorized use of traditional culture without understanding it (Namuwiki, 2021). Under the article, various criticisms of cultural appropriation related to Korean culture are given, including those surrounding the Korean pop (K-pop) industry. There appears to be an emphasis on international fan culture, particularly Western influence.

In this report, the dominant culture identified will be the Korean culture. While there are instances of appropriation of Korean culture by other dominant communities such as the recent debate about Korea's origins by mainland Chinese netizens, it will not be discussed here. This section will focus mainly on cultural appropriation committed by Koreans, particularly in the K-pop scene, to discuss the issues surrounding multiculturalism in South Korea.

Korean Music Scene

After the 1997 International Monetary Fund (IMF) Asian financial crisis, Hallyu (한류), or the Korean Wave, resulted from companies turning to export Korean culture into neighbouring countries to gain revenue. Recently, transnationality has become a phenomenon in Hallyu specifically in Korean music, which has established and diversified different genres (Fuhr, 2017). Fuhr discusses globalisation of K-pop, diving into the transnational flow of immigrant pop artistes. He also suggests that the existence of non-Korean foreign nationals in the industry prove Korean ethnicity and nationality are no longer requirements for pursuing a career in the K-pop industry. For comparison, K-pop girl group Girls' Generation debuted in 2007 with all nine members of Korean background, whereas another girl group Twice debuted in 2015 with four out of the nine members having no cultural relation to Korea. In under a decade, globalisation has led to a rise in diversity among K-pop idols. It has become increasingly common for companies to scout singers from other countries outside South Korea, notably from its neighbours in China and Japan.

Although this trend might reflect the acceptance of diversity in mainstream music, the issue with transnationality in K-pop is the problem of appropriation of other cultures for other interests. Fuhr mentions talent agencies employing new strategies, particularly capitalising immigrant K-pop idols for domestic and foreign markets. This suggests that diversity is not the underlying reason for transationality but financial gain, which supports the origins of Hallyu.

Cultural Appropriation in Hallyu

As mentioned, transnationality was a driving factor in Korean music and its genres since the beginning of Hallyu. One such genre is Korean hip hop, which adopts African American culture in the use of language, fashion and dance. Hip hop culture originated from the New York City Bronx in the early 1970s by marginalized Black and Latino youths (Rose, 1994). Notably in South Korea, K-pop group Seo Taiji and the Boys popularised Korean hip hop since the early 1990, and Korean hip hop reality TV program Show Me the Money (SMTM) continued the trend since its creation in 2012. In their research, Hare and Baker (2017) suggest that Black culture is adopted to commercialise local Korean hip hop culture in SMTM, not to raise awareness of authentic hip hop culture. For example, Korean rappers on the show imitate African American rappers with the use of slang and white-coined words intended to marginalize Black people. The lack of understanding in the origins of such derogatory slang contributes to cultural appropriation of Black culture, though some argue that it contributes to the adaptation of the style of Korean hip hop. To add on, Korean journalist Kang highlighted that the SMTM producers confessed to being completely ignorant of hip hop culture (Hare & Baker, 2017). While rap battles are part of hip hop culture, "diss battles" often seen in SMTM are gimmicks to increase viewership and generate profit. These points suggest that SMTM does not necessarily popularise Korean hip hop and the show might unknowingly be perpetuating Black stereotypes to their local audience.

Supporting this claim, American journalist Kalka noted that cultural appropriation in Korean hip hop is unintentional as it arises "from a place of ignorance" (Hare & Baker, 2017). The acclaim of SMTM for all nine seasons (as of 2020) with high ratings and chart-topping singles implies that the general public is not aware of the occurrence of cultural appropriation.

Other than shows like SMTM, Hallyu often surrounds itself with controversies relating to accusations of cultural appropriation. The globalisation of Hallyu has led to the increase in scrutiny of Korean culture by international fans of diverse backgrounds. These fans raise concerns on the appropriation of other cultures in K-pop based on the music and concept stylings (Figure 4).

Type	Example	Issue	Aftermath
Music	Girl group (G)I-DLE appropriating African culture on Mnet reality program *Queendom*	Group discusses the use of an African music instrumental for an "ethnic hip" concept and imitations of war cry chants	International fans were divided on the issue, particularly on the categorisation of whether it is cultural appropriation or appreciation
Hairstyles	Dreadlocks on K-pop idols, including Korean Rapper San-E, Big Bang member Taeyang and Blackpink member Lisa	Dreadlocks are associated with Black culture and hip hop, yet in these instances they are used for aesthetic purposes	A recurring issue in K-pop that receives backlash from international audiences
Fashion	In girl group Momoland's *Baam* music video, one of the members is seen portraying a Mexican hombre with a Dashiki top	Dashiki is a unisex form of traditional clothing, worn mostly by African natives and now more commonly within the African American community	Widespread criticism on stylists who are not educated on cultural appropriation, or the underlying issues related to it
Religious Symbols	In girl group Blackpink's *How You Like That* music video, a statue of the deity Ganesha was used as a prop in the background	Exploitation of the Hindu religion just for the aesthetics by disrespecting the deity Ganesha	YG entertainment replaced the scene after backlash from fans, but no apology or statement released regarding the accusations

Due to the lack of awareness within the Korean community, international audiences can help detect the problems of cultural appropriation within the K-pop scene in hopes of preventing future occurrences.

Importance of Cultural Appropriation in South Korea

Another issue is the difficulty in determining if something is leaning towards appropriation or appreciation and this grey area can result in conflict of cultures. There are no laws or restrictions in place to regulate this concept and it is often assessed by public outcry and online netizen comments. However, not all acts of cultural appropriation that cause profound offense are immoral (Young, 2005). Young suggests that there are many factors to consider, such as the time and place of the act and the extent of toleration by the affected minority groups. Individuals have their own thoughts on the issue of cultural appropriation and may either tolerate or take profound offense on certain acts. Though challenging to predict the extent of reactions on such acts, knowledge on the subject matter can minimise misconceptions of various cultures.

Cultural appropriation is inescapable when cultures come into contact (Rogers, 2006). Rogers suggests that cultural exchange will inevitably create some form of appropriation, whether it is intentional or accidental. With the rise in diversity among the South Korean community, measures should be taken to prevent misunderstandings among the different ethnic groups. The future of multiculturalism in South Korea will depend on the awareness of cultures progress towards cultural appreciation instead of appropriation.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, given South Korea's demographic that is progressing towards an ageing population, there is a great need for an influx of labour to support this demographic. With many young Koreans turning away from blue-collar jobs and instead pursuing elite positions, the government has to rely greatly on foreign labour to fill in these positions. South Korea will continue to see a rise in immigrants residing in the country, and therefore have to embrace diversity and build an inclusive society in order to progress the nation forward towards a multicultural society.



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SOUTH KOREA BEAUTY STANDARDS



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INTRODUCTION

Margaret Wolfe Hungerford once said, ‘Beauty is in the eye of the beholder’. Beauty and social constructs have been around for ages, far longer than we actually think, especially in both Western and Asian cultures. With the evolution and advancement of technology, it has grown by leaps and bounds, becoming more accessible to not just famous stars, but the common people as well. In this essay, we specifically explore South Korean beauty - the history, the standards and mindsets towards beauty, as well as the positive and negative modern views.

The phenomenon of South Korean beauty, or as it is more commonly known - K-beauty, has been around for ages. However, it was only during the early 2000’s that the South Korean makeup market saw a rise in popularity amongst other countries (Cheong, 2019).

This explosion in popularity, in large part due to the explosion of the Hallyu wave, created waves around the world. Starting in the nearby Asian countries and expanding rapidly to the Western world, the K-beauty we know today centers around having a flawless, bright complexion before applying natural looking make-up, but what was it like in the past? How has makeup evolved over the years? We explore the role that make-up has in society, both modern and past.

HISTORY OF K-BEAUTY

There is a common belief that current make-up trends and products are very different from the past. However, that could not be further from the truth, especially in terms of ingredients and order and more particularly its quest for beauty. As Ms Kim Chung Kyung, regarded as Korea’s first make-up artist said, “K-beauty is all about creating the illusion of a flawless complexion” (Chung, 2013).

This began from the time of the GoJoseon Period, when Korea was first established during King Dangun’s reign. Although there are very few records of what the make-up style was like during this period, the origin of Korean cosmetics began here when they used ornaments and coloured them as a symbol of their social class and position as well as religious beliefs. As GoJoseon moved into the Three Kingdoms era, the style of make-up correspondingly changed according to the influence neighbouring countries had, as well as what each kingdom prized as important.

THREE KINGDOMS ERA

GOGURYEO

In Gorguryeo, a round face with thin eyebrows and styled hair had been in fashion as they were influenced by China. It was so impactful that regardless of whether they were rich or poor or the status they carried, the people of Goguryeo were absorbed in make-up. This was evidenced by the discovery of an ancient tomb mural in Susan-ri and Ssangyoungchong where both the noblewomen and maids were depicted as having the same make-up (A Step Back In Time: The History Of Korean Cosmetics, n.d.). All of them had beautifully combed hair, trimmed eyebrows and wore rouge on their cheeks.

BEAKJE

On the other hand, the people of Baekje focused on light make-up as they believed that it was a sign of high cosmetic technology. As Japan had learned to produce cosmetics and make-up techniques from Baekje, this belief was proven to be correct. In addition, according to Japanese literature, before cremation was widespread in Japan, they specifically learned cosmetic manufacturing techniques from Baekje when presenting their dead (A Step Back In Time: The History Of Korean Cosmetics, n.d.).

SILLA

The Silla Kingdom was the most elaborate out of the three as they believed that beautiful souls were possessed by beautiful bodies, regardless of gender. This was the Kingdom that created the Hwarang Warriors, who wore make-up and accessories such as jade rings, bracelets, necklaces and jewellery. In 692, a Korean Buddhist monk created lead powder which was subsequently used as the first foundation. This also proved that the manufacturing techniques of Silla were superior as it was an unprecedented invention in the world of cosmetics. The manufacturing techniques were further developed, resulting in face powder and rouge not just for the cheeks, but the lips as well (A Step Back In Time: The History Of Korean Cosmetics, n.d.).







UNIFIED SILLA

After the Three Kingdoms consolidated and became Unified Silla, make-up etiquette became more extravagant than before. This was in part due to the proximity and influence China had as a major neighbour and player of imports and exports. As braided and knotted hair became more and more prevalent, cosmetics and rings became more ubiquitous, with headbands made of gold (A Step Back In Time: The History Of Korean Cosmetics, n.d.). Cosmetic products themselves showed considerable improvement in terms of packaging and ingredients used. During this period, women were addicted to extreme luxury and beauty, a characteristic that remains true to this day.



GORYEO

While cosmetic manufacturing techniques bloomed and were excellent during the Three Kingdoms period, the politicians of the Goryeo Dynasty insisted that the collapse of Silla was caused by a trend of sumptuousness, with some even going as far as to insist on prohibiting extravagance. However, as Unified Silla had inherited the political, economic, and military system of Silla, as well as its customs and social customs, the Goryeo Dynasty too had also succeeded and advanced the trends that Silla originated. With the people of Goryeo much more invested and interested in make-up, quality levels consistently remained excellent and bronze mirrors, made more elaborate than those from the Three Kingdoms era and Joseon Dynasty, were in high demand. Due to these excellent quality levels, it was even believed that the cosmetics culture of the Goryeo Dynasty spread to China, especially the Yuan Dynasty (A Step Back In Time: The History Of Korean Cosmetics, n.d.).

JOSEON

As the age of the Goryeo Dynasty shifted into the Joseon Dynasty, the ruling class of the Joseon Dynasty emphasised frugality, similar to the Goryeo Dynasty. The only difference was that the teachings managed to take hold in the Joseon Dynasty. Due to this, women placed emphasis on inner beauty rather than outer beauty. However, the production of cosmetics in the Joseon Dynasty was not reduced or ignored. On the contrary, make-up sales continued to be promoted and focused on round, naturally coloured eyebrows and peach powder for the lips, as this was the popular look during the holiday season. As frugality was strongly practiced, make-up and ornamentation was only donned for outings, meetings and rituals. Only gisaeng, court ladies, and musicians wore thick make-up throughout the year (A Step Back In Time: The History Of Korean Cosmetics, n.d.). As the sale of make-up continued, signs of industrialisation could be seen through the wide diversification of the production and sale.







MODERN DAY KOREA

As signs of industrialisation continued to take place, the Joseon Dynasty began to slowly morph into modern day Korea. With the South Korean government realising that this market had a unique opportunity to grow and expand rapidly, they took up the challenge and in 2 003 , commissioned corporate giant LG to create a premium cosmetics brand that showcased the long historical traditions of skincare in the Korean royal courts (K, 2019). Thus, this is how ‘History of Whoo ’ began. Prizing itself for its medicinal herbal ingredi ents, it has followed and maintained the long-standing tradition of using natural ingredients that are good for the skin and body. With six natural ingredients as the basis for all their products, History of Whoo quickly became one of several expensive brands that focused on medicinal herbal ingredients.

MAKE-UP AND SKINCARE

As previously mentioned, make-up and skincare has not changed drastically from the time of the Three Kingdoms to the present day. This is evident from the belief that make-up was not only for external purposes, but also internal. This meant that anything they used or put on had to be good for both the outer and inner body. Thus, they focused on natural ingredients. Ground mung beans or “ jodu ” was used as a cleansing soap, as the properties in the beans were good for extracting impurities in the skin. Many different oils from plants were extracted and used for various products: some for hair, like the camellia plant, while others, like the apricot, peach and safflower plants were used for moisture, gloss, and to relieve liver spots and freckles.

As Korea prized fair skin, ground rice and millet, also known as “ milbun ” or “ beakbun ”, were used as powders. “ Milbun ” was blended with water or a natural oil to better adhere to the face. Another known use of flowers was to extract the colour and use it as a rouge for the lips and cheeks. One such popular product was the “ Yeonji ” flower. Like today, the eye brows continue to be a key feature. Thus, eyebrow ink made from plant ash and soot in indigo, black, blue or dark brown was used to draw various shapes of the eyebrows (Kim, 2013). These historical methods and products have been passed down through the age s and reinforced the belief that natural is the way to go.





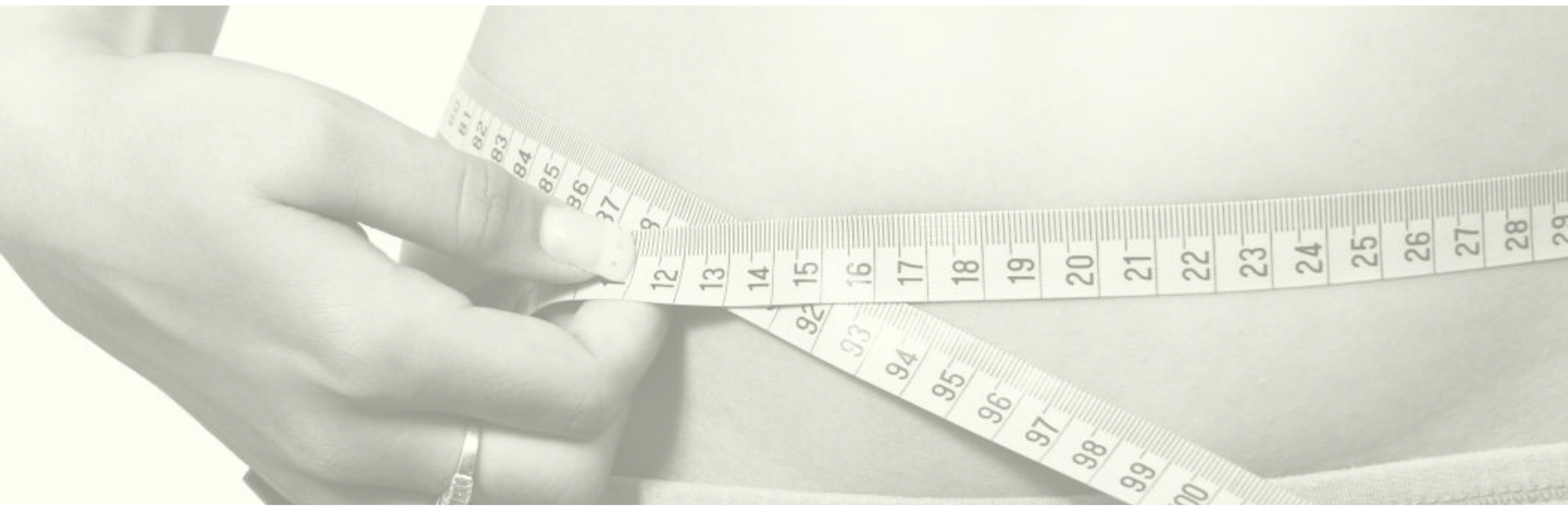


PLASTIC SURGERY

This has even extended into the realm of plastic surgery where the national psyche of physical perfection is ingrained. It is worth noting that in 2017, plastic surgery ranked second after dermatology for nationwide specialist doctor recruitments. In fact, plastic surgeon Dr Jung Hyunwook notes that many patients regard double-eyelid surgery merely as an extension of the tape and glue fixes that many men and women use nowadays to achieve bigger eyes through double eyelids (Lee, 2018). We will delve further into this topic at a later stage of this essay.

DIET

In accordance with their beliefs regarding inner beauty, Koreans focused on the food they consumed as well. Not to be confused with popular celebrity diets, this Korean diet was the standard for all before the explosion of K-pop and the beauty ideal of having a slim body. The characteristics of a normal K-diet included various recipes based on rice and grains. Fermented foods and vegetables from wild landscapes and the seas were the focus and Koreans tended to consume more legumes and fish with less red meat to help aid digestion. A lot of medicinal herbs such as garlic, green onion, red pepper, and ginger were used for cooking or eating raw with sesame and perilla oil as the base for cooking. Koreans also tended to limit the amount of deep-fat fried cooking they did and had more meals based on seasonal produce in order to touch on the amazing properties these seasonal ingredients possessed. All this culminated in various local cuisines and dishes bein g born. As they wanted to make sure all this worked, they preferred to have home-cooked meals rather than dine-in at restaurants (Kim et. al., 2016). All these aspects contributed to the South Korean beauty standards that we know today. However, as we have seen, it did not just spring up out of nowhere, but rather, has a long history that it is just as illustrious as Korea's own.



SOUTH KOREAN BEAUTY STANDARDS

The South Korean society heavily enforces beauty standards and has created an ideal physical image which South Koreans aspire towards. However, there have been debates to whether these standards are too unrealistic. In fact, they have forced many, especially women, to resort to unhealthy methods of achieving this ideal appearance. When placed alongside beauty standards in other countries, South Korean beauty standards provide a rather disappointing image of the Korean society.

GENERAL TREND OF SOUTH KOREANS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS FACIAL BEAUTY

According to Rhee (2017), perceptions of facial attractiveness differ across different age groups, different genders and different races. For instance, females usually perceive skin condition as a much more significant factor to the perception of facial beauty than males do. On the other hand, males perceive the shape of lips as a much more significant factor to the perception of facial beauty than females do.

Despite the difference in perceptions across different groups of people, the standards of Korean beauty follow a general trend. Rhee's study shows the three factors which are the most important for facial attractiveness in both men and women. These are:

1. Harmony of facial features
2. Skin condition
3. Facial expression



Furthermore, to visualize the facial configuration currently considered as beautiful by Koreans, Rhee generated a facial composite consisting of the top 15 female Korean celebrities with the most attractive facial features. The composite face is reflective of the results based on participants' responses, and is an example of an attractive Korean face based on the contemporary aesthetic preferences of Korean people.

SOUTH KOREAN FEMALE BEAUTY STANDARDS

The South Korean society's perception of 'attractiveness' has always circled around the same physical features (Seoul Cosmetic Surgery, 2020). Hence, beauty standards remain stagnant as the ideal physical image of a woman is based on a foundation that does not change.

The physical appearance of a person encompasses three aspects: skin complexion, body size and facial characteristics. The society strictly enforces certain features in each aspect in order to create the stereotypical and ideal image of a female which South Korean women aspire, or are even desperate to achieve.

SKIN COMPLEXION

Blemish-free and fair skin, almost translucent in appearance, is a symbol of beauty in South Korean society. To achieve this skin tone, women follow a strict skincare regime, which includes the use of skin whitening products. The routine use of skin whitening products has reached 40% in South Korea, and the demand for such products is continuously on the rise (Cable News Network (CNN), 2018). Moreover, women even resort to whitewashing photographs of themselves, further enforcing the ideal image of a woman.

FACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

A small, petite and fairy-like face, with double eyelids and a V-shaped chin make up the ideal facial characteristics of a woman (Seoul Cosmetic Surgery, 2020).

BODY SIZE

When it comes to body size, Korean women should have slim bodies: a slim waist, thin hips, a petite body and long legs are ideal (Seoul Cosmetic Surgery, 2020).

Especially for body size and facial characteristics, the unrealistic standards force women to conform to societal expectations through unhealthy methods.

WESTERN FEMALE BEAUTY STANDARDS

South Korean beauty standards, when placed alongside beauty standards in the Western world, provide a rather disappointing image of the Korean society. Compared to Western beauty standards, Korean beauty standards prove to be extremely unhealthy.

Unlike South Korea's stagnant beauty standards, beauty standards in the Western world have always been evolving. The standards of beauty change with the rise of an influential star, from Marilyn Monroe, to Audrey Hepburn, and to the Kardashians today (Seoul Cosmetic Surgery, 2020).

SKIN COMPLEXION

In the Western world, whitewashing is not a common practice, and the demand for skin-whitening products is low compared to the Asia-Pacific market for such products (CNN, 2018). Rather, tanned and bronzed skin is preferred by Western women (Seoul Cosmetic Surgery, 2020).

FACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Presently, a thin nose, plump lips and doe-like eyes make up the ideal facial characteristics of a Western woman (Seoul Cosmetic Surgery, 2020).

BODY SIZE

The Western society does not enforce a slim and petite figure like in South Korea. An hourglass figure is preferred regardless of body size (Seoul Cosmetic Surgery, 2020).

It is important to note that these beauty standards are not as strictly enforced in the Western world, compared to beauty standards in South Korea; the Western standards will continue to evolve. Today, the Western world is starting to be more body positive. By promoting plus size clothing brands and designs, the Western world embraces change, and is building up healthier and more positive beauty standards as compared to South Korea.

SOUTH KOREAN MALE BEAUTY STANDARDS

South Korea places standards on men as well, and the country has become one of the beauty capitals of the world for male beauty. Make-up, for example, is not seen as a gendered product and South Korea itself is proud to advertise many brands and products that are available to men. In fact, men grooming products contribute to 10% of the South Korea makeup industry (London Runway, 2019).

SKIN COMPLEXION

Similar to South Korean women, men also strive to achieve fair and blemish-free skin, which is also seen as a symbol of beauty among men.

FACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Facial features are ideally small and slender, with a high nose. Makeup such as contour and foundation sculpt a chiselled and refined face (London Runway, 2019).

BODY SIZE

When it comes to men's bodies, an androgyne figure is preferred over a muscular body. The appeal of an 'attractive' Korean male is connected to the increasing popularity of what is colloquially known as 'flower boy', which refers to feminine-looking men (London Runway, 2019). Height is also an extremely important factor in determining the attractiveness of men.

While expectations of female beauty in Korea usually outweigh male expectations, South Korea is still notable for the standards placed on men.

MINDSETS TOWARD BEAUTY IN SOUTH KOREAN SOCIETY

South Korea is notoriously known for their hyper fixation on outward appearances and cosmetic surgery. The extreme focus on appearance pressures both women and men to conform to societal expectations and m any spend relatively significant amounts of money to undergo cosmetic surgery procedures. The prevalent appearance-consciousness of South Koreans is deeply embedded in their culture. As such, South Koreans have adopted several mindsets towards beauty over the years. .

APPEARANCE AS A SYMBOL OF STATUS

As a classist country, many South Koreans view appearance as a symbol of status. This results in the phenomena that great appearance equates to being successful and having a high social standing in South Korea, thus appearing “upper class” and elite becomes the ultimate beauty standard to achieve (Cho, 2020).

For example, pale skin is considered elite. In the past agricultural Korean society, people from higher socioeconomic statuses had the privilege of not having to work laboriously under the sun. As such, having pale skin is associated with having a higher social status while darker skin is associated with being in an “lower class” (Cho, 2020).

The extent of this mindset can be seen in the South Korean cosmetics industry, where foundations cater to a light specific type of skin tone. It is rare for South Korean cosmetic companies to manufacture and produce products for darker skin tones. This is due to South Korea’s agricultural society in the past, where the privileged class did not have to work under the sun and therefore had lighter complexions. This classist and divisive view resulted in the association between dark skinned South Koreans and the lower class. Additionally, the influential K-pop industry saturated with fair skin beauties, further reinforced the ideal and desirability of fair skin (Garner, n.d.). As such, having dark skin is considered undesirable to many South Koreans and many go to great lengths to achieve pale porcelain skin tones in fear of being antagonised by society.

IMPORTANCE OF APPEARANCE IN ACHIEVING OPPORTUNITIES

South Koreans also view having outstanding physical appearances as their leverage in gaining opportunities in education and in jobs. For instance, it is believed that the better looking one’s resume photo is, the more likely he or she would land the job (Cho, 2020). Having the privilege of good looks allows one to experience better success in life and preferential treatment from those around them (Cho, 2020).

This phenomena is demonstrated through the South Korean film, “200 pound beauty”, where the main female character, Kang Han-na, went for head to toe cosmetic surgery after being mistreated and neglected by those around her for years. She received very little opportunities and was not able to go far in her life due to her outward appearances. After she made the decision to go for the cosmetic process, her life started improving almost immediately. She was even able to achieve her lifelong dream of signing a record deal, and people around her started treating her better (Go, 2015).

The movie further illustrates the correlation between beauty and opportunities in South Korea and affirms the notion that good looks are essential to go far in one’s life.
With such a strong focus on appearances, it is apparent how many South Koreans are incentivised to follow the conformist ideals of beauty in the modern world.

CONFORMITY

PREVALENCE OF COSMETIC SURGERY

South Korea is known as the world's plastic surgery capital (Garner, n.d.). In fact, one in three South Korean women between ages 19 - 29 years old have undergone cosmetic surgery (Garner, n.d.). With this heavy emphasis on outward appearances, there have been extreme cases.

Hang Mioku is a South Korean model who was so desperate in seeking physical perfection that she underwent multiple plastic surgery procedures and spiraled into addiction. It was so bad that her doctors refused to give her more plastic surgery, which she afterwards responded by injecting fish oil into her own face (Evans, 2013). Her face was left permanently disfigured and unrecognisable in the overhaul.

In another case, a plastic surgeon revealed that his young patient was 8 years old and the decision to go for cosmetic surgery was made by the child's mother who wanted her to become a child actress. Critics have responded by saying that how a mother should teach her daughter how to value her appearance and build her self-confidence rather than getting her child to change her appearance at such a young age (Koreaboo, 2019).
Such cases show that many South Koreans are unfortunately held captive by the strict beauty standards in their society that many become desperate to achieve that ideal.

K-BEAUTY TRENDS

The prevalence of K-beauty trends have involved ubiquitous unhealthy weight loss diets and the limited variety in cosmetics reinforce the narrow beauty standards that many South Koreans idolise. These trends are followed by many in hopes to conform to society's ideal of what a 'perfect' physique should be.

K-POP DIETS

Many K-pop diets essentially glorify and promote malnutrition and starving in order to get hold of a slim figure. There is even a '50kg myth', which is an ideal created by the media that shames women who weigh over 50 kg. This ideal is perpetuated by idolised Korean celebrities who openly discuss weighing 40 kg and below (Adolph, 2020).

An example of such diets would be the 'IU sweet potato diet'. The diet strictly includes consuming one apple, two sweet potatoes and a protein power drink each day (Jeong, 2021). The extent of this has caused the singer, IU, to suffer from eating disorders and low self esteem. She became bulimic after she felt anxious, doubting and hating herself, fearing that her popularity and success could be taken away at any time after several comments were made online about her gaining a bit of weight (Jeong, 2021).

Such anxiety is continuously instilled in many young South Koreans, especially K-pop idols, as they fear being labelled as "unpretty" and "incompetent" if they were to not fit into South Korean beauty standards.

SOUTH KOREAN COSMETICS

The South Korean cosmetic industry is fond of producing cosmetic products that cater mainly to light, pale skin. It is rare for them to produce and manufacture products that cater to darker skin tones (Cho, 2020).

There is also the popular use of skin whitening products and procedures (Cho, 2020). This is due to the fact that South Koreans, as mentioned, favour porcelain skin which indicates wealth and beauty. In fact, skin lightening is one of the most common and most sought after procedures in South Korea.
Henceforth, with the direction that the South Korean cosmetic industry is going, many South Korean feel the need to conform in order to fit into the limited framework and variety of K-cosmetics made available to them.



ONE-DIMENSIONAL VIEW ON BEAUTY

Many institutions in South Korea reinforce a one-dimensional and uniform image of beauty. To them, trends are important to follow, and individuality is not typically glorified nor positively reinforced (Cho, 2020). As a result, there is little room for appearing different or having unique features. This can lead to homogeneity amongst the population as people feel the pressure to conform to beauty standards in order to not be ostracised.

A NORM FOR EMPHASIS ON APPEARANCE

In South Korean culture, it is very common to compare one's features to others at a young age. It is a "normal" part of everyday conversations and these habits carry throughout adulthood, where past insecurities are more likely than not, already internalised (Cho, 2020). Subsequently, this contributes to feelings of obsession in appearance which can manifest in a variety of ways. For example, South Koreans may subconsciously choose their circle of friends based on their level of attractiveness rather than other attributes, such as character or intellect. It can also be projected in subtle ways such as poor judgment and decision making throughout one's life (Cho, 2020).

It is worth noting that while these ideals of South Korean beauty are concerning to foreign eyes, South Koreans do not see the fuss over it, especially since it benefits them in terms of jobs and success.

NEGATIVE MODERN INFLUENCE

South Korea's beauty standards are not without their consequences. While they may manifest themselves in positive ways, many negative aspects of such standards have been identified. Lookism, defined as 'prejudice or discrimination based on physical appearance and especially physical appearance believed to fall short of societal notions of beauty' (Merriam-Webster, n.d), can be considered the most extreme embodiment of such negative perspectives. In her study on such behaviours, Lee (2016) further elaborates on the term, calling it a way to control and discipline women's behaviours and relationships with their own bodies. It is further described as being a powerful force when it comes to women heeding to these beauty standards, as lookism has created a mindset that a woman who does not 'maintain' herself is seen as a waste of potential, or even a 'lazy and incapable' (Lee, 2016, pg. 17). Furthermore, it is used as the basis of discrimination, be it in relationships, or in the job search, and is considered the norm in South Korean society.

DOMESTIC INFLUENCE

In South Korea itself, the extent of such beauty standards can be seen in their influence on mass media, celebrity culture, as well as in their cultural norms. As mentioned previously, South Korea's beauty standards have become embedded in their cultural norms, with lookism at the forefront. In advertisements for image-related activities, such as make-up, skincare, plastic surgery, or dieting, the terms 'self-management', 'self-development', and 'self-investment' have been found to be a common occurrence (Lee, 2016). This reinforces the idea that beauty is something that one must invest in, and harkens back to the idea that an ugly woman is simply a woman who does not want to invest in herself. This notion of 'self-investment' is furthered by the belief that one's looks are critical for future success, therefore suggesting that looks are used as a barometer of success. This can be seen in how South Korean teens as young as 14 years old have begun to get double eyelid surgery or even nose jobs after school (Ko, 2002), often returning home unrecognisable. With double eyelid surgery even becoming a common graduation gift (Ko, 2002), the idea that looks are important for future success is becoming more prominent amongst the younger generations of South Koreans.

In the instance of mass media, television programmes have been instrumental in normalising cosmetic surgery. One such example is the normalisation of bimaxillary surgery, also known as double jaw surgery. Despite being a serious surgery that is often used to correct jaw abnormalities (Nunez, 2020), it has been normalised as a way to appear younger and to achieve the beauty standard of having a small face, seemingly ignoring the severity of such a procedure.

Such normalisation of procedures has been a key feature on makeover shows like Let Me In, An Agent for Beauty, and The Birth of Beauty: Reset (Kim, 2020), and is a mere extension of lookism, where cosmetic surgery is only seen for its aesthetic merits, rather than health benefits. In addition, it has been found that K-pop television programmes have begun to influence the body image concerns of South Korean girls as young as 5 years old, largely due to K-pop's existing beauty standards and body image (H. Kim & Han, 2020). This suggests that mass media is also used as a medium to disseminate the ideas of South Korean beauty standards, which have begun to negatively affect young Koreans.

Celebrity culture has also influenced South Korean beauty standards, largely due to their assistance in the popularisation of plastic surgery. As they are held to and deemed the enforcers of such standards, their continued presence in pop culture has inevitably led to many wanting to emulate their features. Many cosmetic surgeons have alluded to patients requesting surgery in order to copy the look of a certain celebrity (Cho, 2011), leading to the homogenous beauty status quo of South Korea. Furthermore, as celebrities are often pushed to maintain their public image, they have also participated in the popularisation of dieting culture. For example, one of the most notorious celebrity diets is the IU diet, named after the singer's dietary plan consisting of 1 apple, 2 sweet potatoes, and 1 protein powder drink a day (Jeong, 2011). Another example would be the Seolhyun diet, named after the member of girl group AOA. It consists of chicken breast, sweet potatoes, eggs, greek yogurt, and nuts. While effective for weight loss, these crash diets have the potential to cause harm to the body and are not advised to be followed in the long-term (Ong, 2019). Despite that, they have become recognisable terms and are often attempted by fans (Ong, 2019).

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Beyond the domestic influence that lookism has had, one must also consider the global impact that it has created. The rise of Hallyu as one of South Korea's most valuable exports can also be considered a sort of 'trojan horse' - with products such as K-dramas and K-pop gaining immense popularity overseas, bringing with it embedded notions of lookism. As such, South Korean pop culture is suggested to have been a medium to unconsciously spread the standards of beauty to a global audience. In the case of Indonesia, Halim & Kiatkawasin (2021) had found that K-dramas had become popular amongst Indonesian women. As they had become influenced by the physical appearances of actors in the dramas, they had subsequently begun to invest in Korean beauty brands. This is likely due to the visual appearances of celebrities being correlated to Korean brand perceptions, and thus leading to the belief that if they too used these beauty brands, they would be able to look like these actors. Similarly, in the case of Vietnam (Lee, 2016), it was found that sex workers idolised K-pop stars and sought to model themselves after them, through the use of make-up, clothes, as well as various cosmetic surgeries. Such sex workers catered to elite Vietnamese businessmen, suggesting that such Korean standards of beauty were seen as superior to that of Vietnam's own.

Furthermore, Hallyu's impact on the global popularisation of South Korean beauty standards is most evident in South Korea's booming medical tourism industry, with those at the forefront of the Hallyu wave being walking advertisements and embodiments of the South Korean beauty standards. This suggests that through the popularity of such idols and actors, fans have begun to develop desires to look just like their favourite stars and are using cosmetic surgeries to achieve that. This further perpetuates South Korean beauty standards in a global context. In addition, with the number of foreign patients who visited South Korea for plastic surgery increasing from 2, 851 in 2009 to 66, 969 in 2018 (KHIDI, 2019), this implies that more have begun to glorify South Korean beauty standards and have subsequently visited the country to achieve these standards. As such, South Korean beauty standards have begun to permeate the global unconscious through the Hallyu wave, and have continued to propagate the notion of lookism.

POSITIVE MODERN INFLUENCE

Despite having lofty Korean beauty standards, the rise of feminism in South Korea has started to change the values among Korean women on the depictions of beauty. Besides women, Korean men have changed the way masculinity is being perceived and demonstrate d. In addition, South Korea has become a beauty hub. With the K-beauty industry going global, and the increasing number of foreign patients seeking cosmetic surgery there, South Korea is the world capital for cosmetic surgery. Both cosmetic surgery and the beauty industry have greatly contributed to the South Korea economy.

FREE THE CORSET MOVEMENT

This movement encourages women to fight against the narrow definition of beauty in South Korea. The purpose of this movement is for Korean women to feel comfortable with themselves and not have social pressures limiting their identities.

South Korea is fighting against the unrealistic beauty standards that require women to spend hours applying make-up and perform skincare regimes that involve at least 10 steps or more. This requires them to wake up a few hours before work to ensure that they have their meticulous skincare routines and make-up done before stepping out of the house. Women who are sick of this laborious routine have started posting videos on social media destroying piles of cosmetics with the catchphrase “Escape the Corset”. These cosmetics are likened to the garments used to constrain their bodies into an ideal shape.

The movement is a larger push against South Korea’s patriarchal society. Many women demand greater gender equality and are fighting against issues such as illegal filming and sexual assault. This movement not only aims to challenge sexual objectification but also the status of women, as they are often seen as subordinate to men (The Guardian, 2018).





Case Study: Cha Ji-Won

When Cha was 12, she was exposed to cosmetics. During middle school, she violated school rules by applying foundation to lighten her skin tone. In her early 20s, she spent over 100,000 won a month on cosmetics. However, as feminism started to rise in South Korea, Cha decided to ditch all her makeup and cut her hair. Now, she only spends 4000 won a month on personal care products such as lip balm and moisturizer. She started a YouTube channel to promote feminism, which ironically was the same platform that once taught her makeup techniques. Instead of spending time worrying about being ‘pretty’, Cha now uses that time to read books and exercise instead. The whole transformation made her feel that she had been reborn again (Haas, 2018).

INFLUENCE ON MASCULINITY

South Korea has become the epicenter of beauty and male celebrities are now synonymous with cosmetics. According to a 2018 global data report, three-quarters of Korean men receive beauty treatments at least once a week. Compared to the past, there are more forms of soft masculinity, which are demonstrated by the pretty boy and gentle male image. This is also known as the Kkominam - which refers to a man being as beautiful as a flower. This was inspired by the bishonen concept from Japan. However, this is not feminine. It is a phenomenon that can be explained through the idea of versatile masculinity (Flowerboys and the appeal of “soft masculinity” in South Korea, 2018).

In America, most male celebrities on television appear manly, muscular, and have facial hair. In contrast, male Korean celebrities have a slim figure and use make-up. In Korea, make-up has no gender or sexuality as it accommodates everyone, and male celebrities help to show that men can feel more masculine in their own way by wearing make-up. They have realized that putting on cosmetics makes them look cool and helps them to feel more confident. South Korea has proven that make-up enhances one’s confidence, which is what masculinity encompasses. With K-pop being in the current global spotlight, it is changing the way the world views men who wear make-up (Yi, 2020).

Case Study: Holland (Go Tae-Seob)

Holland is the first openly gay K-pop soloist. As a solo singer, make-up allowed him to find the courage and become himself. He describes beauty as “when my confidence in self-expression is able to show through visually”, and that it “is achieved by having both inner and outer beauty” (Yi, 2020). Furthermore, make-up allows him to emphasise who he is, thus giving him the freedom of self-expression.

BOOMING BEAUTY & COSMETIC SURGERY INDUSTRY

The South Korean beauty market has expanded all over the world. K-beauty products are best known for their natural, unique ingredients and high efficacy. These beauty products can be seen in almost every cosmetics store around the world. The United States alone has imported over US $624 million Korean cosmetics in 2019 and K-beauty accounted for approximately 70% of Asia Pacific beauty products’ market share. In 2018, the K-beauty market size was valued at US $9.3 billion and is estimated to reach US $21.8 billion by 2026 (Thawdar Oo, 2020).

Plastic surgery has also become a highly lucrative industry. According to the South Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, nearly 50,000 foreigners went to South Korea for a beauty makeover in 2017, which made up 12.3% of all the medical tourists in South Korea. Tourist spending on cosmetic surgery has jumped about four times since 2012. The visitors spent a total of 215 billion won in 2017, which accounted for 33.6% of total revenue from foreign patients. Cosmetic surgery was the highest medical expense per capita with 4.4 million won. This made the plastic surgery sector the country’s most lucrative revenue source (IMTJ Team, 2018).

South Korea has become one of the major centers for medical tourism in Asia. The hospitals and clinics are of world-class standards as they are well equipped with the latest technology of medical equipment. Most of these hospitals belong to the private sector and have doctors who have international qualifications and proficiency in English. South Korea has thus been able to establish its country as the major center for cosmetic surgery (IMTJ Team, 2018).

HELP TO LEAD A NORMAL LIFE

Many would think that plastic surgery focuses on enhancing one’s appearance to achieve a desired look. However, another reason for plastic surgery is to correct or restore one’s facial forms and functionality. There may be cases where plastic surgery is crucial and necessary for people who suffer from various ailments, such as facial deformities, illness, or accidents. They are often bullied and looked down on by others due to their physical appearance. Plastic surgery helps these individuals to lead a normal life (Chow, 2014).

According to a study conducted by Ip & Ho (2019), people with childhood psychological trauma who underwent cosmetic surgery have indicated that the surgery helped them to not only heal physical imperfections, but also psychological wounds. It relieved the suffering of childhood trauma, reduced body dissatisfaction, and resolved internal conflicts (Ip & Ho, 2019).

Case Study: Let Me In

Let Me In’ is a South Korean plastic surgery makeover television programme where candidates share stories about their suffering due illnesses or accidents that caused them to suffer from indescribable hardship due to the distortion of their original appearance. They are often desperate to receive help and hope for a new life.

In one episode, a candidate had difficulty chewing solid foods due to decayed teeth from an accident when she was a child. Since then, she has suffered from immense pain every day and was unable to sleep or swallow food, resulting in severe gastric erosion. With plastic surgery to fix this issue, she had regained her long-lost self-esteem, confidence, and dignity. She also found reasons to smile again, and recovered the desire to pursue a better-quality life (Chow, 2014).



The standards of South Korean beauty have come a long way since the Three Kingdoms era. However, society's perception of beauty has become increasingly distorted, resulting in a modern South Korean society which strictly enforces unrealistic beauty standards. As having an ideal physical appearance becomes unconsciously embedded in their culture, South Koreans may start to adopt toxic mindsets towards the notion of beauty, and this toxicity has regrettably influenced other parts of the world as well. However, despite the negative influences of South Korean beauty standards domestically and globally, it is clear that South Korean beauty still has its benefits. Furthermore, the 'Free the Corset' movement is one of the positive indicators that South Korea is starting to take steps in acknowledging its unrealistic beauty standards.

William Shakespeare once said, 'Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye.' In the near future, we hope that South Koreans will be freed from the societal expectations enforced upon them and instead pursue their own standard of beauty.

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GLOBALISATION OF HANGUL



Chin Kai Lee
Choo Gan Kay Cheryl
Megan Lim En
Tan Jolnn

ABSTRACT

Hangul, the alphabet for the Korean language, is considered as the world's most scientific alphabet. This paper presents an overview of the invention of the written alphabet by King Sejong in 1446, and the subsequent historical developments of Hangul to its contemporary orthography today. Subsequently, it elucidates the core characteristics of the contemporary Hangul alphabet and its components. The core focus of this paper is the discussion of the globalisation of Hangul worldwide. Firstly, it investigates the work of different organisations in proliferating Korean language-Hangul education in different countries, such as the Hunminjeongeum Society and King Sejong Institute. Thereafter, it expands on the adoption of Hangul as a means to transliterate the unwritten languages of the world, looking at specific examples such as the Cia-Cia Language of Buton , Indonesia and Taiwanese Hangul.

HISTORY OF HANGUL





According to the 1446 promulgation: "A wise man can acquaint himself with them (the letters of Hangul) before the morning is over; a stupid man can learn them in the space of ten days."

Before the invention of Hangul in 1443, the Korean language had to be transliterated into Classical Chinese characters, alongside other native phonetic scripts available at that time. Otherwise known as Hanja, Chinese characters were used to transliterate the sound of Korean words. Despite the gap between the Chinese characters and the Korean language, Classical Chinese was still the main written language used by ancient Korean societies in order to record their historical texts. However, due to the complexity of Classical Chinese, many lower class Koreans remained illiterate and the mastery of Chinese was restricted to the elites as a means for them to centralise their power and privilege.

In 1443, during the Joseon Dynasty, King Sejong was known as one of the greatest rulers of Korea. He is credited as the inventor of Hangul, alongside many other inventions, as part of his mission to promote literacy amongst the common people. In fact, King Sejong kept the Hangul project secret at first, knowing that the ruling class would be greatly opposed to commoners gaining access to a written language. Unsurprisingly, when Hangul was first publicly released, it faced opposition from the literary elite in Korea and Korean Confucian scholars who believed that Hanja was the only legitimate form of writing, and were undoubtedly fearful of the threat of Hangul to their status.

The invention of Hangul was officially formalised by the publication of the Hunminjeongeum in 1446. The name “Huminjeongeum” literally translates to “The Proper Sounds for the Education of the People.” The document was intended such that anyone could use it to educate themselves on Hangul. From the introduction of this important document into ancient Korean society, it allowed for Hangul to be adopted by different classes of people - including women and writers of popular fiction. The legacy of the Hunminjeongeum continues till today, with 9 October, the purported date of its publication celebrated as National Hangul Day in Korea.



Within the history of Hangul, there have been considerable developments that demonstrate the fluctuation and evolution of this written language to its contemporary form today.

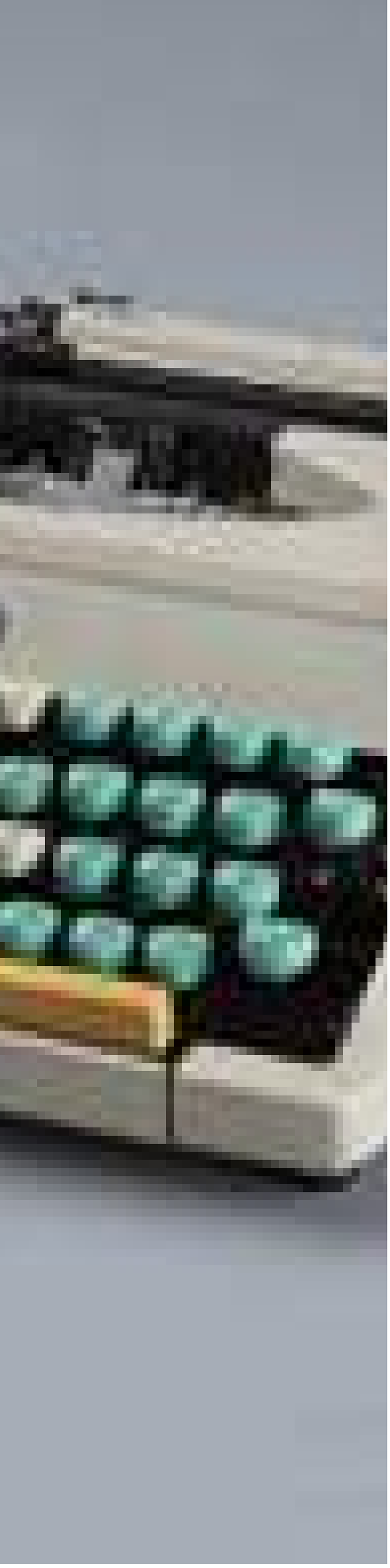
In 1504, King Yeonsangun banned the study of Hangul after commonters put up posters making fun of him in Hangul. This ban on Hangul continued in 1506 when King Jungjong abolished the Ministry of Eonmun, an institute related to Hangul research. This reveals the threat that the upper class of society felt from the growing proliferation of a written language that allowed all classes to access the privilege of written communication. Despite these limitations on the learning of Hangul, the later part of the 1500s saw a revival of Hangul with the flourishing of Sijo and Gasa poetry as well as Hangul novels.

The following 18th-19th century saw the greater recognition of Hangul in both Korea and outside of Korea. In 1796, Hangul was first introduced to the Western world through a Dutch colonial officer. While 1894 marked the official adoption of Hangul in official court and governmental documents. Thereafter, elementary schools and newspapers also began to officially adopt Hangul as an alphabet.

In the year 1910 - 1945, Korea was annexed by Japan and the effects of Japanese colonisation on Hangul were immense. Not only was Japanese made the official language of Korea, the Japanese deliberately banned of Korean literature and publications and outlawed the Korean language. This affected the linguistic developments of Koreans coming of age in that period, but linguistically, it also resulted in some reforms to the orthography of Hangul.

After the liberation of Korea in 1945, the definitive modern orthography that we are familiar with today begins to fully develop. With the division of Korea, it is notable to see that even between North and South Korea, there were eventual differences in the type of Hangul that was adopted. In North Korea, Hanja was banned in 1949 and the alphabet used by North Koreans rely solely on pure Hangul.







NATIONAL HANGEUL MUSEUM

Located outside the National Museum of Korea, there is a smaller museum dedicated entirely to charting the history of Hangul's development in Korea. The museum houses many interesting Hangul related artefacts such as the first Hangul typewriter that was invented in 1950, as well as original documents and early publications.

The museum also curates many interesting exhibitions that document various aspects of Hangul and the Korean language. One such example is the Korean Pop Lyrics - Melodies of Life exhibition that analysed the universality and globalisation of Korean pop lyrics.

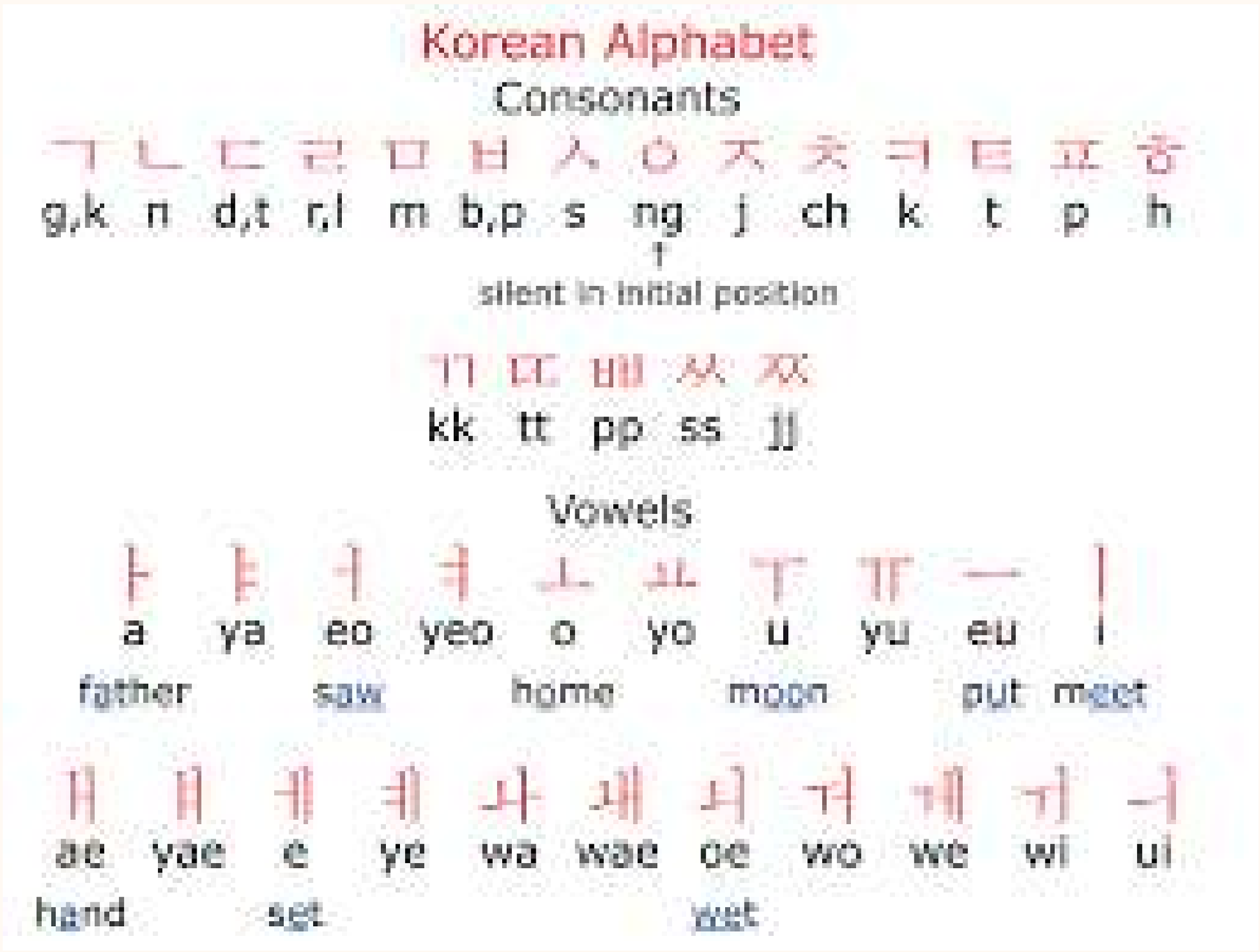
The museum's continued work in the area of Hangul and the Korean language reveals the intricacies of what is considered to be the world's most scientific alphabet - from its invention as a means to democratise literacy and its development to a globally recognised written alphabet.



INTRODUCTION TO HANGUL: KOREAN ALPHABETS

Hangul is an alphabetic script, consisting of 40 letters which includes 19 consonants, 10 simple vowels and 11 diphthongs. Among these 40 letters, 24 are the basic letters while the other 16 are compounds formed from the basic letters. (Wordpress.com, 2009) Out of the 24 basic letters, 14 of such letters are consonants while the remaining 10 are vowels. (Enunce, 2007).

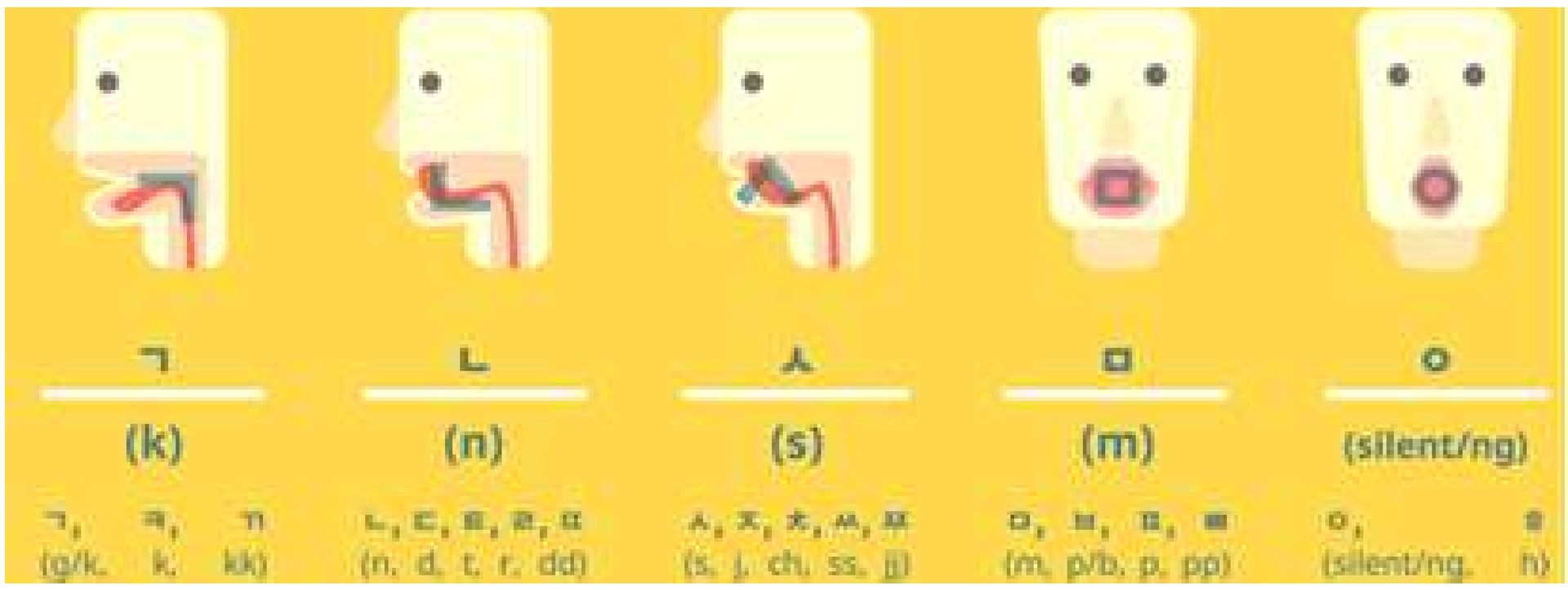
The consonants and vowels can be stacked together to form a word. This is more efficient because it takes up less space, as compared to other written languages, and it increases the reading speed. Each work consists of at least one consonant and one vowel. For common structures, the word is written from the left to the right or from the top to the bottom. Whereas for uncommon structures, the word is either written from the top to bottom to the right (horizontal vowel), or from the left to right to the bottom (vertical vowel). (Hangul, a National Language) By this format of combinations of letters, there are in total 11,172 possible syllables by using only 24 of the alphabets.



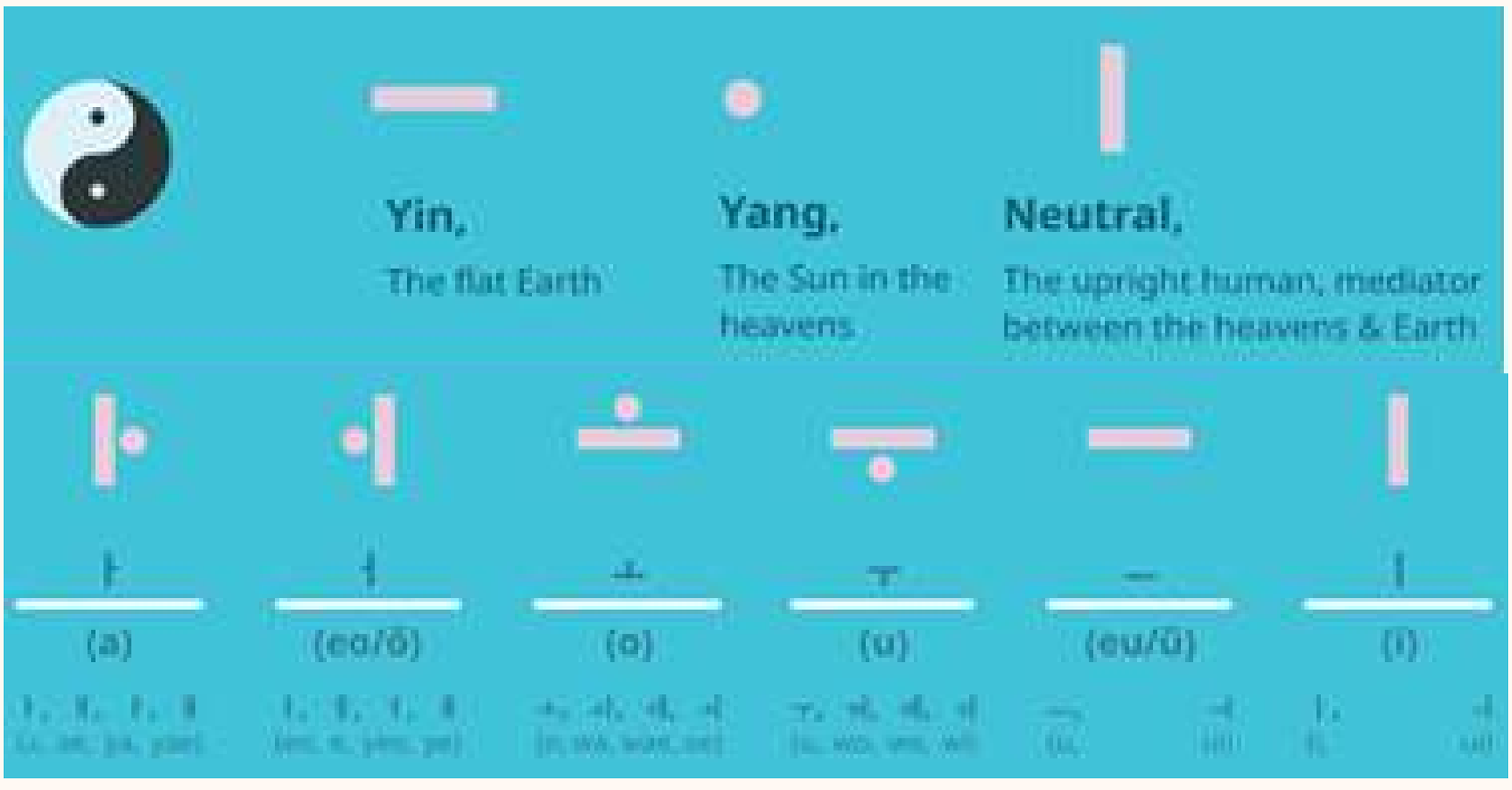
SHAPES AND ORIGINS OF THE ALPHABETS

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The three primary vowels consist of one horizontal line, a dot and one vertical line, representing the earth, the sky, and humans respectively. It also reflects the idea of yin, yang and neutral. A diverse combination of these three shapes are used to express all Hangul vowels. In contemporary hangul, the dot has been replaced by short strokes as though the dots were written with a brush in calligraphy.



OBSOLETE HANGUL

There are a few obsolete Korean letters and sequences that are no longer in use, some of which were letters only ever used to represent the sounds of Chinese rhyme tables. Even though some of the Korean sounds represented by these obsolete letters still exist in some dialects, it is unknown as to how exactly these letters sound during the 15th century when it was last used.
The list of several obsolete letters include:

1. ㆍ (transcribed ɐ (arae-a 아래아 "lower a"): Presumably /ʌ/, similar to modern eo. It is written as a dot, positioned beneath the consonant. The arae-a is not entirely obsolete, as it can been found in various brand names and is often used in spelling the dialect of Jeju Island, Korea's southernmost province, where it is /ɒ/. Even so, it was not transcribed in the official Revised Romanization and thus modern renderings of the Jeju dialect transcribe it the same way as ㅗ, that is, o. Korean words that were written with ㆍ long ago are now usually written with ㅏ.
2. ㅿ z (bansiot 반시옷): Modern Korean words previously spelled with ㅿ substitute ㅅ. The description of this character originally was 而 [이].
3. ㆆ ʔ (yeorinhieut 여린히읗 "light hieut" or doenieung 된 이응 "strong ieung"): A glottal stop, "lighter than ㅎ and harsher than ㅇ".
4. ㅇ̫ ŋ (yesieung 옛이응): The original jamo for [ŋ]; now conflated with ㅇ ieung. The description of this character originally was 異凝 [이응].
5. ㅸ β (gabyeounbieup 가벼운비읍): IPA [f]. This letter appears to be a digraph of bieup and ieung.
6. There were three other less common jamo for sounds in this section of the Chinese rime tables, ㅱ w ([w] or [m]), a theoretical ㆄ f, and ㅹ ff [v̤]; the bottom element appears to be only coincidentally similar to ieung.

GLOBALIZATION OF HANGUL

In recent years, South Korean pop group BTS has gained immense popularity all around the world, topping almost every music chart, winning prestigious awards, achieving new titles and breaking new records with every new song. Not only BTS, other K-pop groups such as Blackpink have increasing popularity worldwide. Other areas such as Korean dramas and Korea movies also have high viewership around the world. The explosion of the South Korean pop and K-dramas all around the world has an impact on the Korean society to a point that the South Korean government has plans to tap into the popularity of the "hallyu wave" to expand the government-run "King Sejong Institutes" around the world to promote the Korean language and culture. The South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism announced in September 2020 that they will spend $75.2 million on promoting Korea's "hangul" alphabet, teaching more people the korean language, in hopes to gain more attention in other areas such as history, art and cuisine. There are in total 213 King Sejong institutes in 76 different countries as of 2020. Most of these institutes set up are usually in collaboration with the local universities or colleges. (Bangkok post, 2020)

Aside from these Korean platforms that promote or encourage people to learn Hangul, foreign countries have also come up with their own way to allow people to learn Hangul. The U.S. Modern Language Association found that partly because of the craze, more students in the U.S. are learning to read and write Korean. Between 2006 and 2016, the number of university students enrolled in Korean almost doubled. This was the biggest increase for any language with over a thousand students (Statista, 2019).
Additionally, people can access basic Korean Lessons on the free language learning app DuoLingo, which has also noted an increase in interest in Korean. Korean is now the sixth most popular course on the app, of the 300 million users, 3.3 million are learning Korean. The language's popularity can also be seen from the number of people taking the Test for Proficiency in Korean, a total of 264,842 took the TOPIK in 2018, an increase of 77% from 2010. (Lee Sun-young, 2019)

CONTEMPORARY HANGUL

HUNMINJEONGEUM

The Hunminjeongeum (Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People) is an official document that describes an entirely new and native script for the Korean language. It was created by King Sejong (1397-1450) in 1446, during his reign as King of Joseon. This new script was originally named after the publication, but came to be known as Hangul in modern times. King Sejong had stated that the current system, which is based on Chinese characters, was not fitting for the Korean language, and was discriminatory towards the vast majority of the people who were illiterate. Hence, the Hunminjeongeum was initially created so that commoners who were illiterate in hanja could read and write the Korean Language.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO) has confirmed the Hunminjeongeum as the world's only alphabet in which its creator and purpose of creation were known in 1997. UNESCO has assigned it to be in the Memory of the World Programme, which was established in 1992 to preserve and document different heritages around the world.(Memory of the World Programme, 2021) .

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUNMINJEONGEUM AND MODERN HANGUL

Over the years, there are many changes in the way the people in Korea use Hangul. In the 15th Century, the characters were written in columns, and are typically read from left to right. Chinese characters are written above some hangul characters, and these are usually used as the pronunciations for the Korean characters. Tonal language of hangul is indicated by dots on the left of the character. No dot indicates a normal tone, one dot indicates a high tone, and two dots indicate a rising tone. As seen from Figure 12, some of the consonants in the Hunminjeongeum that are highlighted are omitted in modern hangul, and the use of the single dot vowels and chinese characters are not used anymore.





HUNMINJEONGEUM SOCIETY

The Hunminjeongeum society, also known as the Hunminjeongeum research institute, is a private organization in Seoul dedicated to the propagation of Hangul to all the unwritten languages of the world. The society's founder Dr. Lee Ki-Nam, a retired real estate agent turned entrepreneur, was inaugurated as the First Chairman of the Board on 18th September 2007. Shortly after, on 9th October 2007, a conference and general meeting was held to celebrate the foundation of the Hunminjeongeum society. (The Hunminjeongeum Society) Dr Lee Ki-Nam is actually a direct descendant of King Sejong, and when asked for her reasoning to found this society, she had stated that her main objective was to express the will of King Sejong, who wants Hangul to be a common language for all. There were attempts to bring Hangul out of Korea, to places such as the Tungusic Oroqen in Heilongjiang, China, the Chepang of Nepal, and the Lahu of Chiang Mai, Thailand.

However, failure to do so was attributed to a reliance on Korean Christian missionaries in those countries, where their primary focus was not on literacy and linguistics. In 2009, a successful attempt was made in getting the city of Baubau, on Buton Island in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, to adopt hangul for the Cia-Cia language. The Hunminjeongeum society has published sets of textbooks for the people in Baubau to learn in school, using the conventional spelling system of Hangul designed by Dr Lee Ki-Nam. Eventually in 2012, it came to be known that this adoption has failed and has been abandoned.

KING SEJONG INSTITUTE

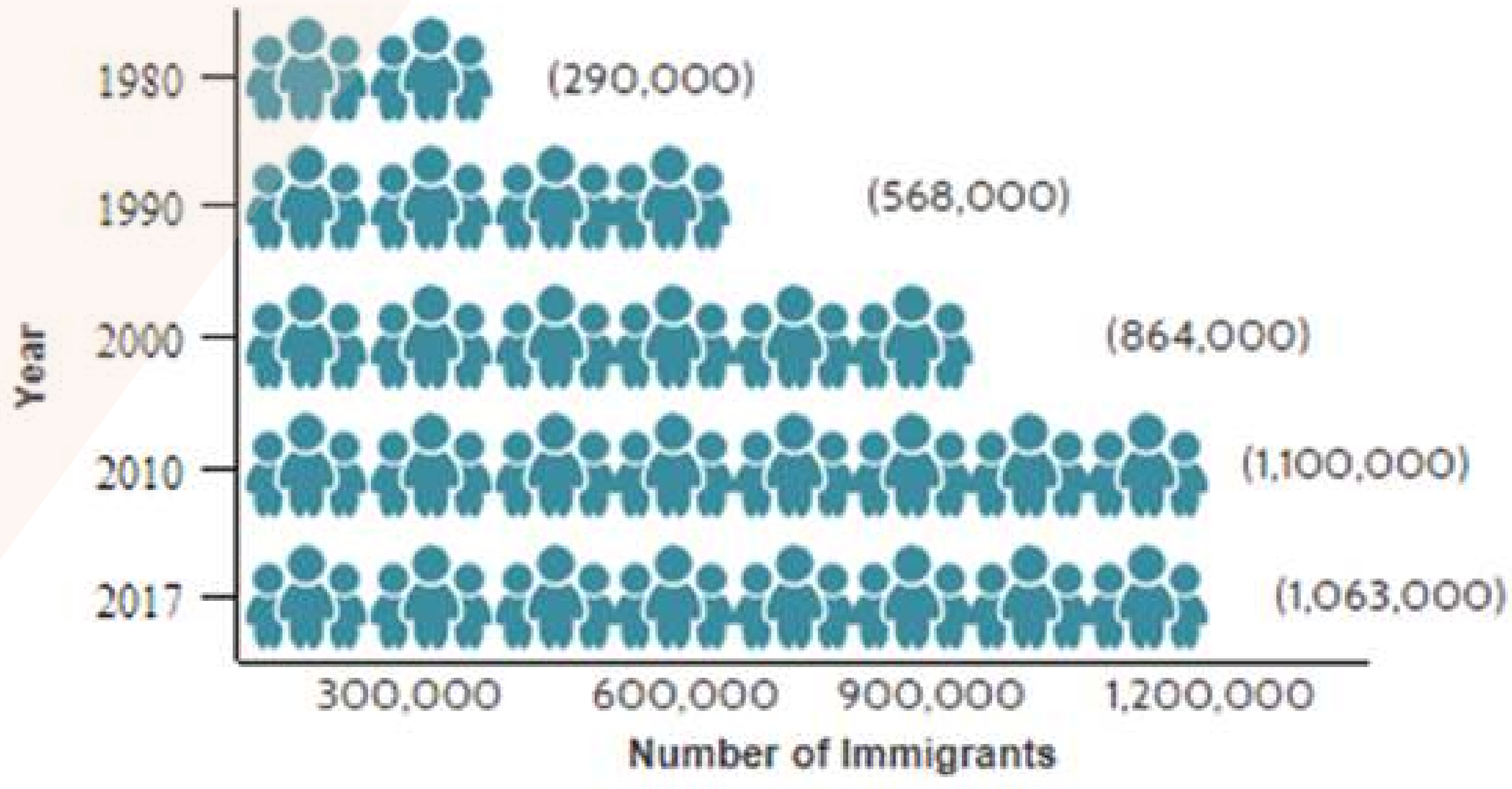
The King Sejong Institute is the brand name of Korean language institutes by the South Korean government around the world since 2007. The name is unsurprisingly named after King Sejong the Great, creator of the Korean alphabet. As of Jun 2018, there are 167 King Sejong Institutes in 55 countries around the world.

There are various reasons for setting up these institutes all over the world. Firstly, after the Immigration Act of 1965 removed restrictions on Asian immigrantion to the United States, the number of immigrants have increased significantly (Figure 15) This drastic increase is mainly due to the economical, political and military relations between South Korea and the United States. (Korean Migrants in the United States) This increase in Korean immigrants will eventually lead to an increase in the 2nd and 3rd generation descendants of Korean immigrants, and these institutes aim to teach these descendants their native language in a foriegn country. In South Korea itself, Korean learners are mostly foreign students, migrants workers, or the spouses of Koreans.

Next, the number of people learning korean has increased. The rise in demand and interest for the Korean language due to cultural and commercial globalisation, has caused this rise in numbers.

People internationally, regardless of age, are gaining interest in the Korean contemporary culture, such as Korean dramas and music. This has been coined as the infamous ‘Korean Wave’, where Korean pop culture is the next ‘it’ thing in the world. This is also accompanied by the increase in foreign students studying in Korea. Demographically, there is also an increase in marriages between Koreans and foreigners. South Korea, which has the 4th highest GDP in Asia, has also seen an increase in international cooperations and business. With this, the South Korean government has been striving to standardize the names of locations, people, and other proper nouns in Hangul. Hence, it can be seen that there's a general increase in the number and the need for Korean learners in many different aspects.

Lastly, with this overall increase in demand, the South Korean government has established the concept of ‘Sejonghakdang’ to provide integrated and standardised services and information for learning the Korean language, and to expand and coordinate the places where people can learn or teach this unique language. The ‘Sejonghakdang’ will be developed as the brand commonly used by all Korean language education institutes.





ADOPTION OF HANGUL ALPHABET INTO UNWRITTEN LANGUAGE: CIA-CIA LANGUAGE

The origin of the Cia-cia language is founded in Buton, Indonesia. The island is located off the Southeast peninsula of Sulawesi which is around 4408 km 2 in area.

Other than the Cia-cia language, the people in Buton also adopt the other languages like Wolio and Bahasa Indonesia. Cia-cia language is also known as Buton or Butonese and it is a Malayo-Polynesia or Austronesian language, spoken mainly in Bau Bau, a city at the southern tip of Buton. Cia-cia language is an oral language and it never had a writing system of their own. However, the use of Cia-cia language is slowly declining due to the growing dominance of Bahasa Indonesia.

In order to save the spoken language, Hangul alphabets are introduced in Bau Bau and it serves as their official writing system. Hunminjeongeum society attempted to introduce Hangul as an alphabet system to transcribe the Cia-cia language. In July 2008, Professor Lee Ho-young from Seoul National University offered to create the writing systems and textbooks based on Hangul. She also offered to build a $500,000 Korean cultural center and promote economic development. This allowed the Cia-cia people to learn Hangul and adopt it into their spoken language. In the same year, they signed a memorandum of understanding to incorporate Hangul in their writing system. In July 2009, 2 Hangul instructors were sent to teach Hangul to the Cia-cia people. In the following month, they began to use Hangul to write Cia-cia language. They also began to teach children on the Hangul alphabets which gained international media attention.

Mayou Amirul Tamim, mayor of the Bau Bau city, consulted the Indonesian government on the possibility of marking the writing system official.

This Hangul Cia-cia language program was abandoned in 2012 due to some difficulties. A host of media outlets claimed that Mayor Amirul Tamim said the Indonesian government had approved the adoption of Hangul as their official writing system. This outraged Professor Chun Tai-hyun and stated that the reports were groundless and based on a mistranslation of Mayor Amirul Tamim's comment. Professor Chun said that Mayor Amirul Tamim only began the official discussions and consulted the Indonesian government on adopting Hangul as their official writing system but the media misinterpreted Mayor Amirul Tamim's comment. He also stated that the adoption of Hangul in the Cia-cia tribe is very unlikely. The reason is that Indonesia's Basic Law stipulates that all tribal languages should be preserved in Roman characters for national unity.

Translation of Cia-cia language

Cia-Cia Language
Adi sering pali nononto televisi. Amano nopo'ombae ia nanumonto televisi kolie nomolengo.

Hangul alphabet
아디 세링 빨리 노논또 뗄레비시. 아마노 노뽀옴바에 이아 나누몬또 뗄레비시 꼴리에 노몰렝오.

English Translation
Adi watches too much TV. His father advises him not to watch too much TV.

ADOPTION OF HANGUL ALPHABET INTO UNWRITTEN LANGUAGE: GHANRI AND LAU LANGUAGE

Ghanri language and Lau language are mainly used in Guadalcanal and Malaita province respectively. These 2 provinces are in Solomon islands which is a country in Oceania. Solomon islands is a sovereign state consisting of 6 major islands and over 900 smaller islands. Soon after the abandonment of the Hangul Cia-cia language program, Guadalcanal and Malaita provinces decided to use Hangul as their writing system. In Guadalcanal province, they used Ghanri language to speak and in Malaita province, they used Lau language. SInce its independence from the British colonial rule in 1978, the Solomon islands experienced communication difficulties because 70 different tribes on the islands all use different languages. There are only 2% of the population who can speak English which is their official language. They tried to teach their native language in English writing system but due to financial difficulties and other reasons, they ended the program. Subsequently, 2 Korean speaking local teachers began to teach the Hangul alphabets at each of the schools in Guadalcanal and Malaita province respectively. Eventually, they designated Hangul as their official writing system. To sum up, it is said that education will be introduced to more schools and hope to cover the whole country if successful.

ADOPTION OF HANGUL ALPHABET INTO UNWRITTEN LANGUAGE: TAIWANESE HANGUL

Taiwanese Hangul is an orthography system for Taiwanese Hokkien. It was developed and promoted by the Taiwanese linguist Hsu Tsao-te in 1987. Taiwanese Hangul uses modified Hangul alphabets to represent spoken Taiwanese

Matthew 6:1 [edit]

Taiwanese Hangul		Pèh-ōe-jī	
Chinese characters	關係行善的教訓 恁要謹慎，毋通為著欲予儂看，故意做儂的面前顯示恁的善行； 恁若按呢做，恁就袂當對天父得著報賞。		
Chinese-Hangul mixed writing	關係行善ê教訓 恁要謹慎，毋通為著欲予儂看，故意做儂ê面前顯示恁ê善行； 恁若按呢做，恁就袂當對天父得著報賞。	**Chinese-Latin mixed writing**	關係行善ê教訓 Lín tioh謹慎，m-thang為著tioh boeh hō儂看，故意tsò儂ê面前顯示lín ê善行； Lín若án-ne做，lín就袂當對天父得著tioh報賞。
Hangul	관해 형션 에 깁흔 린 뎔 근신 , 몸당 위뎔 뼬 호 람 토 , 고이 닥 람 에 뻔정 현시 린 에 션형 ; 린 나 런내 저 , 린 쥬 폐당 뒤 션후 닙뎔 버요。	**Romanization**	Koan-he Hêng-siân ê Kâu-hún Lín tioh kín-sīn, m-thang ū-tioh boeh hō láng khoà', kò-ì toà láng ê bīn-chêng hiān-sī lín ê siān-hêng. Lín nā án-ne chò, lín chiū bē-tàng tùi Thiān-hū tit-tioh pò-siù'.

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EDUCATION IN KOREA



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INTRODUCTION

With one of the highest literacy rates of 97.9% globally , South Korea has developed a reputation for having some of the smartest students in the world (OECD, 2019). The education system has received praises from many global leaders . F ormer US president, Barack Obama, praised South Korea for allowing their students to have the necessary skill to adapt to the current global landscape and the excellent treatment of their teacher (Fenton, 2018). However, it is also one of the most stressful countries in the w orld for students to be studying in, with its high suicide cases. These factors make South Korea's education system worth analysing . By studying the history, achievements and pitfalls of the South Korean education system, this research aims to draw the lin k between the past and the present. We also delve into its shadow education system, Hagwon , drawing parallels with Singapore's education system to allow mutual improvement in both education systems.

HISTORY OF KOREAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The history of Korean Education can be traced as far back as the prehistoric period. Education in Korea has been heavily influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism.

TIMELINE AND EVOLUTION

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

It has been speculated that the earliest Korean a ncestors might have migrated to Korea from Siberia and North Manchuria. People were mainly educated by integrating into society. Education was based on the nature of their jobs, such as fishing, combat, hunting, fishing and tool making, heavily relying on anecdotal teachings such as the development of Samsin (Three Gods, 삼신), animism and shamanism.

GOJOSEON PERIOD

During the Gojoseon period, traces and details of education can be found in Samguk Yusa , a collection of historical records, legends and folktales relating to Gojoseon and the three kingdoms. There was evidence of education for agriculture, medicine and mo rality. The first Korean education slogan, Hongik Ingan (홍익인간 ; 弘益人間) was created during this period which means 'live and work for the benefit of all mankind".

THREE KINGDOM ERA

Though the three kingdoms frequently invaded each other's territories, they had similar cultural and historical backgrounds. Despite their main religions being Buddhism, their education is heavily influenced by Confucianism instead of Buddhism. This was because Confucianism is more suited to cultivate government officials due to the cardinal Confucian tenet “to build the mind and govern the nation. (BongHee, 2018)

GOGURYEO PERIOD

There were records and traces of education and the use of writing during the Goguryeo period. The book, Yoogi, was written during that period. The firs t education institution to be established in Korea was named Taixue, also called Taehak , which modelled their institution based on Eastern Jin Dynasty. However, only aristocrats were accepted into Taehak, where they would be trained as high ranking government officials. The government also established private village schools called Gyeongdang, mainly attended by unmarried youth aristocrats and commoners. They were taught Confucian texts, history and martial arts. (BongHee, 2018)

BAEKJE PERIOD

There has been evidence suggesting that Baekje adopted the scholar of broad learning, also known as savant and established its own ministry of education called Sadobu . Though there were no records of the establishment of educational institut ions, it is implied through ancient historical Japanese books such as Nihon Shoki and Kojiki . However, further evidence of education can be found in the history book, Seulgi .

SILLA PERIOD

Like the three kingdoms, there were traces of education during the Silla period. Silla had a unique education system called Hwarangdo (Flowering Knights) that trained male youths to be elite warrior corps, becoming future political and military leaders. The Hwarang corps originated from a volunteer private youth group but was later developed into an educational institute called Hwarang, mainly focussing on martial arts due to growing invasion within their surroundings.

UNIFIED SILLA

Silla managed to unify Korea to form in 668 AD, thus ending the three kingdoms era. Silla education was then influenced by foreign influences, adopting parts of their curriculum from the Tang Dynasty. Their main education institution was Gukhak (국학 ; 國學) fo cusing mainly on humanities like Confucian texts and history. They discarded their original institution of Hwarang as it was no longer needed due to the unification. They organised civil examinations to select government officials and the candidates were called Dokseo Sampumgwa . (BongHee, 2018)

GORYEO PERIOD

Although education was heavily influenced by Buddhism, its philosophical and social structure is based on Confucianism. The curriculum was based on Classic of Filial Piety and the Analects and final examinations were conducted annually. There was also evidence that the government had plans to expand education to rural areas.

JOSEON PERIOD

Education was heavily influenced by Confucianism. The education system was managed by the Ministry of Rites from the Six Ministries of Joseon and humanities were more valued over vocational education, pinning more focus on gaining ranks and personal cultivation. King Sejong, the fourth king of this dynasty, invented Hangul to standardize writing style, resulting in a skyrocketing literacy rate. The government required each region to establish a school and a system called Seungbo was eventually introduced to sieve out to-be government officials. Many educational institutions were created for primary (Seodang), secondary (Sahak), higher education (Sungkyunkwan) and even school for the royal family. (Joghak)

In 1976, South Korea later opened up its port to the rest of the world. King Gojong, the king of Joseon, decided that the traditional way of education based on Confucianism should be replaced with a more modern education style that focused more on liberal education and curriculum based on Western education. In 1894, King Gojong abolished the traditional social status and civil service examination, promising that he will open up colleges and professional schools to cultivate talents regardless of their status.

JAPANESE COLONIZATION

After being colonized by t he Empire of Japan, Japan introduced the Joseon Education Decree (조선교육령 ; 朝鮮教育令) and Private School Regulation (사립학교 규칙) in 1911. The decree was meant to obliterate all Korean cultural and spiritual independence to keep Koreans colonized. The Japanese educat ed Koreans in preparation for jobs rather than furthering their education. They were prohibited from learning Korean history, geography and were instead forced to learn Japanese culture. Schools' curriculum was mainly in Japanese.

THE POST-JAPANESE COLONISATION

In 1945, US-allied forces won World War II and liberated Korea from Japanese rule. The United States Army Military Government then governed South Korea for three years and introduced education policies that focused on democratic education. These pol icies promoted a more self-governing education administration and attempted to make basic education available for all students. The main goal was to ensure South Korea could attain independence, eradicating any Japanese influence and any militaristic ideol ogy, eventually introducing democratic ideology. (Yoon, 2014) Policies such as restoration of the Korean language were needed, as 80% of Korean citizens were unable to write in Korean after the Japanese Colonial education policies.



POST-KOREAN WAR

After the Korean War in 1948, the first president of South Korea, Syngman Rhee and his government managed to establish a unified education policy. Due to the Korean War, education policies put more emphasis on national defence and the development of individual character to attain ideological unification. Policies like compulsory education, the establishment of schools and colleges, implementation of school examinations, and retraining of teachers were introduced to ensure successful implementation of the Korean education system.

After the 19 April Movement, Syngman Rhee resigned. Education policies were taken over by President Yoon Bo Seon and Prime Minister Jang Myeon. They introduced and based their education policies on the slogan of 'Man of Decent Character', focusing on 'Educational Progressivism of America' advocated by John Dewey, instead of knowledge-based education. (Sahlberg, 2012)

PARK CHUNG HEE'S REGIME

The education system went through another change due to a military coup on 16 May 1961, led by Former President Park Chung Hee. He overhauled the education policies that were introduced during Syngman Rhee's republic. He introduced concepts such as practicability, independence, productivity into the education policies and stressed the importance of training students to develop the necessary skills and technology needed to aid the industrialization of South Korea (Yoon, 2014). The government continued to make education compulsory and expand education facilities within the peninsula. During his presidency, the education system became more competitive, seeing the rate of students having intermediate education jumping from 35,1% in 1966 to 40,8% in 1970 (Eunmee, 1998).

In 1961, President Park enacted the Temporary Education Act, where each province established at least one Education College and established the first technical high school. In 1968, he slightly reformed the Korean education system to raise the status of universities by introducing the first University Entrance Examination, ensuring equal opportunities for university admission. Despite achieving significant growth and meeting the demand of a growing society, it resulted in problems like increasing competitiveness, the lack of teachers and a dip in quality of education. (Yoon, 2010)

Needing to resolve these problems, Park Chung Hee introduced the high school equalization policy. By standardising the curriculum, unfair competition between prestigious and common schools was reduced (BongHee, 2018).

CHUN DOO HWAN GOVERNMENTS

After the a ssassination of Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan led another military coup to overthrow the current government, becoming the fifth president of South Korea. He amended the constitution by introducing policies to provide more education opportunities. Due to th e growing number of students, the High School Equalization Policy was retained. However, it fell short, affecting education opportunities for lower-income students who were unable to attend private lessons. In a bid to ensure equal educational opportunitie s, Chun Doo Hwan introduced a 7.30 measure, banning private lessons and capping the number of university graduates. (BongHee, 2018)

POST MILITARY REGIME AND GLOBALISATION

After the 29 June 1987 democratic movement, Chun Doo Hwan stepped down and the introduction of the first democratic election took place. South Korea shifted from a military regime to becoming a democratic government. Kim Yong Sam was the first civilian to be elected as president in 1993. He made various reforms towards the education system and introduced the slogan, 'New Korea, New Education' and 'Creation of New Korean, for Advanced Korea'. The structure for the New Educational System was developed in 1995 to help South Korea become a more knowledge-based society by giving schools more accountability and autonomy. He also relaxed the university enrolment limit, increasing the enrolment number of students. The new system focused on recipient-oriented education, introducing curriculums to foster students' creativity instead of traditional memorization-oriented education, grooming the next generation for the growing global demand for an open market and rapid globalisation. (Yoon, 2014)

In 1998, the Asian Financial Crisis hit. The eighth president, Kim Dae Jung, adjusted the education policies to help with economic recovery by stressing IT development and knowledge, remaining competitive in the rapidly growing global international field of technology.

MODERN ERA

In the 21st century, South Korea's education system continued to focus on the creative leader cultivation system. The revised education curriculum in 2009 and 2015 aims to develop individual personalities and skills to create creative and multidisciplin ary students. The six core competencies were believed to help develop leadership qualities such as creativity, critical thinking skills, confidence, emphatic and communication skills. Students became more adaptable and able to compete in the ever-changing competitive global landscape. (BongHee, 2018)

ACHIEVEMENT & PITFALLS OF KOREAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

ACHIEVEMENTS

Literature has shown that the accumulation of human capital has contributed to the growth in Asian economies, including South Korea (Lee, 2012). Thanks to education expansion in South Korea since Park Chung Hee's regime, Korea's human capital has been educated with skill sets needed for economic progress (Isozaki, 2019). President Chun Doo Hwan's government in the 80s set a long-term goal for "scientific and technological development to shift the Korean economy away from its reliance on the export of products that required cheap labour and toward the production of high-value-added products." (Isozaki, 2019). Therefore, education based on technological development centred on private enterprises was promoted. Lee (2012) states that "studies emphasize the role of technology transfer, which is enabled by higher education supplying educated graduates" (p. 56). In line with this new goal, the merger of research institutions to form the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) consolidated teaching resources and facilities to prepare students for innovation and production of high-value-added products in the future (Isozaki, 2019). These efforts set the foundation for the highly developed South Korean economy we know today.

The success of the South Korean education system can also be seen in their Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranking: 7th for Maths and Science and 9th in Reading (PISA, 2018). Additionally, 70% of 25-34 year-olds hold a tertiary degree, which is much higher than the average across OECD countries which stood at 45% in 2019 (OECD, 2019), indicating that Korea is one of the most highly educated nations in the world (Hess, 2018). It is also the country with the "highest share of young adults with tertiary qualification among OECD countries" (OECD, 2019)

PITFALLS

STRESSFUL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Despite being the envy of many developed Western nations (Chakrabarti, 2013; The Korea Times, 2011) and modelled as one of the best education systems in the world, the South Korean education system has its share of pitfalls. It has produced a stressful educ ational environment that is recreated due to the social expectations of good grades. A single, high-stake exam like CSAT determines the trajectory of your life. According to PISA, a South Korean student's life satisfaction is one of the lowest among other participating PISA nations (PISA, 2018). Students can spend up to 16 hours a day studying (Tai, 2018), resulting in a lack of leisure time to unwind and take a break or explore their own hobbies and interests. Due to long hours dedicated to studying, sleep deprivation has become a parasitic issue even for elementary students. (KoreaBizware, 2018; The Korea Herald, 2014; The Korea Herald, 2020b).

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF OVEREMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE OF A COLLEGE DEGREE

College degrees have become status markers. Blue-collared workers who usually do not hold college degrees are looked down upon and discriminated against by society. Na (2012) states that this "negative social attitude" is due to "the wage gap" that persists "between college graduates and [such] workers", making it very difficult for them to improve their socioeconomic standing, even affecting their prospects of marriage.

RISING UNEMPLOYMENT AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE

Unemployment rate amongst youths (25-29) for both men and women has generally increased between 2000 and 2016 (Choi 2017). Since many SMEs are unable to offer the same work benefits and wages as larger companies, many youths would rather invest time, money and effort into vocational schools to increase their chances of securing an established job, leading to many taking part in informal education or "spend a long time preparing for company entry exams" (OECD, 2019). Similarly, many could also spend years preparing for public-service exams known as Gongshisaeng, due to the competitiveness and low success rates (Lee, 2019). Public service can also seem like a worthy investment due to its steady and stable income and job prospects (Lee, 2019).

Companies are reluctant to hire larger batches of new recruits. According to The Korea Herald (2020c), local companies have been "weighed down by a string of anti-corporate measures". This caused a drastic slow-down in the hiring of young job seekers. Even with the high number of tertiary degree holders, the skills students are learning in universities and the overall education system is simply not compatible or relevant to the job market. OECD (2019) states that the "widespread use [of informal education] indicates a gap between skills supply and demand", and that "employers seem to judge the formal education degrees as insufficient measures of someone's skill, preferring their own employment exams to select their employees". This gap could be due to the previous emphasis on route learning, causing the lack of development in skills that are actually relevant to the current job market.

LIFE OF A TYPICAL KOREAN STUDENT

STRUCTURE OF SOUTH KOREAN EDUCATION

For a normal student in South Korea, they will undergo:

- Six years of elementary school
- Three years of middle school
- Three years of high school
- Further years in higher education

The first nine years of school in South Korea is compulsory education, with vocational education beginning in high school where middle school graduates can choose to go to a general high school. They are then prepared to enter higher education institutions or enter a vocational high school to prepare for the labor market after graduation. Students enjoy two vacations, one from July to August and the other from December to February. (StudyinKorea, 2021)

CULTURAL VIEWS ON EDUCATION

As Confucianism is a deep-rooted belief, its effects can still be felt in South Korea as families place large emphasis and importance on education. Since higher education is viewed as one of the fundamental cornerstones of South Korean life, it is an overwhelmingly serious issue in South Korean society. Education is regarded as a high priority for South Korean families, as academic success is necessary for improving one's socioeconomic position. (Lee, 2014)

Those who graduate from top universities are seen as elite, enjoying employment in the majority of high-ranking government posts and management positions in Korea's business conglomerates. (WENR, 2018) In order for many South Koreans to achieve this certification, South Korean students are taught from young to be competitive and become the best, with the entire education environment fostering the academic culture of being test-ready and succeeding in academics (Calonge, 2015).

HAGWON (CRAM SCHOOLS)

From a survey done between August and October in 2016, nearly 70% of the surveyed parents with 2-year-olds said the level of their child's education was adequate, with 27% saying it was not enough. (The Korea Herald, 2017).

For those with 5-year-olds, 54.3% of parents said their education level was adequate, while 40% said they needed more. The dissatisfaction with the public education system in South Korea can be seen even in early childhood, resulting in many parents sending their children to private schools or tuition called Hagwon to improve their chances at academic success. According to the report published by the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, more than 83% of 5-year-olds and 36% of 2-year-olds in South Korea receive private education. A typical 5-year-old Korean receives private education 5.2 times a week for a duration of 50 minutes per session. For 2-year-olds, the average is 2.6 times a week and 47.6 minutes per session. (The Korea Herald, 2017)

In many cases, 5-year-olds attend normal kindergarten classes by day and go to a hagwon for after-school studies. These after-school sessions last as long as four hours.

COLLEGE SCHOLASTIC ABILITY TEST (CSAT)

The massive financial investment into hagwons by parents is for the end goal of scoring well in the CSAT, a national standardised test recognised by South Korean universities. Students sit for this exam at the end of their high school education on the third Thursday in November. (Lee, 2011). It is well known for being difficult, with its English topic questions being considered hard even by native English speakers (The Korea Times, 2018).

During the day of CSAT, stock market openings are delayed by an hour, public transport services are ramped up and police support is provided to ensure that students for CSAT arrive on time. Planes are also grounded to prevent distraction.

Since CSAT influences the university and career prospects of South Korean students, there is immense stress on students to perform well for the exams, rooting the prevalence of hagwon.

KOREAN UNIVERSITIES

The three main local universities that South Korean families wish for their children to enter into are known by the acronym SKY, which stands for Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University.

Seoul University teaches courses primarily in Korean with a few courses taught in English while Korea University and Yonsei University have a high percentage of courses that are taught in English. Ironically, when comparing the amount of effort South Koreans put in to enter one of the SKY universities, there are other better internationally ranked universities that are much easier to enrol in. (Times Higher Education, 2019).

Interestingly, students who wish to pursue a Doctors of Philosophy in their subject can be exempted from South Korea's National Service. However, the South Korean military has considered removing the exemption due to low birth rates. (Chung, 2019)

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF HAGWON

Hagwon provides remedial support and training in areas not covered by public education. The supplementary education that Hagwon provides helps students improve their test scores for university entrance examinations.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF HAGWON

With such a large number of South Korean students attending Hagwon, the prevalence of a private education sector has caused education to paradoxically become a tool to worsen social inequality rather than improve it. Children from wealthy families are able to better afford quality private education compared to poorer families, giving them a higher chance of academic success. A study by the Pennsylvania State University in May 2010 proved that income in South Korea has a greater effect on academic success compared to before. (Byun, 2010, p.176)

In addition, the average household spending per student was 236,000 won per month in 2012 (Ripley, 2013). This is $260 Singapore dollars per month, according to the 2012 conversion rates. This increases the financial cost of parenthood and contributes to the declining birth rates in South Korea. (The Korea Herald, 2012)

EFFECTS OF SES (SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS) ON ACADEMIC SUCCESS

According to Pennsylvania State University in May 2010 (Byun, 2010, p.176), which uses data collected on test results from the TIMSS database, there has been an observed positive linear correlation between a family's SES and the predicted academic achievement in mathematics for South Korean Students. The gradient for the correlation has increased in South Ko rea from 1999 to 2007, but for the United States, the gradient has remained constant. This means that the influence of SES on a student's chances at Academic success in South Korea has increased from 1999 to 2007, resulting in an increasing disparity in th e chances of academic success between the rich and the poor.

STUDENT SUICIDE CASE STUDY

A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

In 2017, the estimated overall suicide rate in Korea was at 23.0 out of 100,000 persons (OCED, 2021), placing Korea as the country with the highest suicide rate amongst the 37 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED) countries. Even tho ugh the overall number has dropped since 2011, where suicide rates peaked at 33.3 out of 100,000 (Hewlett & Moran, 2014), suicide still remain as the number one cause of death for youths in South Korea (Lee et al., 2020; The Korea Herald, 2020c). According to a report from Business Korea (2015), the yearly social losses due to suicide could be rounded up to $6 Billion USD.

STRESS FROM KOREA'S EDUCATION STRUCTURE

As mentioned before, education is a top priority for the vast majority of South Korean families, as manifested through the existence of an extremely robust and well-oiled shadow education industry (Hagwon). The idea of filial piety is a concept deeply entrenched in South Korea's culture, and thus the child would have to live up to the "strong expectation to respect, obey, and honour one's parents" (Phosaly et al., 2019, p. 115). Parents would also have high expectations of the child, and due to the structure of the education system, parents would naturally pressure their child to achieve higher grades.

This pressure from both their own families and their school environment is further magnified by how much families spend on multiple Hagwon classes. Phosaly et al. (2019) mentions that children that attend more than 4 hours of tutoring a day would be "more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression" than peers who receive less than 4 hours of tutoring (p. 116). 46% of depression cases amongst high school students were attributed to academic pressure (Park et al. 2011). Depression and ideation or risk of suicide has been shown to be correlated as stated by multiple studies in Park et al.'s (2014) paper and is further corroborated in Bae's (2019) paper. It is crucial to note that several other factors like family problems and peer bullying etc. can also contribute to cases of depression and ideation of suicide, not just education pressure. However, many of these factors can overlap, triggering ideation of suicide, and since education is usually the biggest burden of a student, it is more likely than not that education pressures does impact suicide rates.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

As the current support for suicide prevention or treatment for depression is still relatively poor in South Korea, Roh et al. (2016) made some suggestions to improve Korea's mental health services. "First, establish a [independent] national mental health system." (Roh et al., 2016, p. 8) that can allow more continuous investments in mental health research projects. "Second, forecast future demand for mental health services" (Roh et al., 2016, p. 8), so that proper goals and priorities can be made and selected to pressure for an increase in the monetary budget for investments in mental health services and R&D. Roh et al. (2016) found that many professionals that work in South Korea's mental health centres are often severely overworked due to the lack of proper staff-to-patient ratio. Poor work security leads to "high turnover and retirement rates" (p. 9). Thus, the third suggestion would be to "secure and develop professional experts" (Roh et al., 2016, p. 8).

Due to the social stigma against mental illnesses within South Korea, 70% of students with suicidal ideation do not display any related behaviour, making it difficult for teachers to identify students who need immediate help (Liu, 2020). With a better mental health infrastructure set-up and normalizing these services, it could potentially reduce stigma against mental illness.

Ideally, reforms can be made for the overall education system to reduce student's stress levels, such as removing the high-stake CSAT exams or spreading them out across weeks. However, this reform might fall short, since much of the pressure and stress originates from within Korea's culture itself.

GLOBAL APPLICATION

A BRIEF BREAKDOWN OF THE SINGAPOREAN EDUCATION

In 2016, according to the OECD Program for International Student (PISA) Survey, Singapore's 15-year-olds ranked first globally within the areas of Math and Science (Wee, 2020). Despite the relatively short history of 56 years, Singapore has made its mark especially in the sectors of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and has been consistently heiled for owning one of the best education systems around the world. So, just what is the winning formula for Singapore's winning education system?

A 'streaming' device in primary school (for students aged six to 12) utilises regular examinations, class tests and group projects that amount to a student's final grades at the end of the school year. Students would be divided into classes or focused groups when they reach an upper level. Top 40 students of the cohort get sorted into the best, 41 to 80 into the second class and thus forth.
This 'streaming' device works for one goal: to offer more focus and opportunities to those with proven potential. This births the trend of stellar students that emerge on top every Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), Ordinary ('O') Levels and Advanced ('A') Levels. These students, at every stage, are offered special programs.

In primary school, various programmes like the Gifted Education Programme (GEP) is 'designed to meet the needs of intellectually gifted students through an enriched curriculum'. However, the blind spot of such programmes is that many students selected for this opportunity already have external aid like private tuition. Whilst the Ministry of Education (MOE) has already made it clear to parents not to put their schooling children through GEP-preparations (Tan, 2020) because it interferes with the procession of the child's potential and true intellect, many straw polls indicate that affluent households send their schooling children to tuition. Does this mean that the rich get a headstart in a bright, academic future?

Following the PSLE, excelling primary school students could take up an Integrated Programme (IP) only offered in certain secondary schools that grant them exemption from the 'O' Level at Secondary four. Top secondary schools and junior colleges offer opportunities of overseas exchanges, scholarship programmes and a specialised teaching system. According to a Straits Times article in 2015, eight in ten parents send their primary school child to private tuition, and the number remained rather stagnant at six in ten for parents of secondary school students. Another statistic of tuition in Singapore by SmileTutor indicates that 80% of their clients request for more than two tutors, with the goal of providing their schooling child with more academic support. This calls to conclude that wealthier households use their affluence to provide their child the additional academic support they require, or even if they don't, to allow them to reach their maximum potential. But what about families who just cannot afford the pricey private tuition? Does this mean they receive an unbalanced amount of help and support, leading to their inability to reach their full potential?



COMPARING THE SOUTH KOREAN AND SINGAPOREAN EDUCATION SYSTEM: COMMON PROBLEMS

After their independence (Singapore in 1965 and South Korea in 1945), both governments realised the key to compensating for their lack of natural resources and expanding their future industrial opportunities was a self-sustaining and proficient population.

Singapore's system is mainly meritocratic (Csizmazia, 2017): everybody is allowed the same opportunities based on the same non-discriminatory tests. However, the problem arises when a report by the OECD titled Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility, provides results that in 2015, "46% of disadvantaged students in Singapore were attending 'disadvantaged schools', up from 41% in 2009. Disadvantaged schools are defined as those which take in the bottom 25% of the student population, and poorer students in these schools face the disadvantage of not having access to the best resources." Families in Singapore are reluctant to back down from the fiery competition that broods among their schooling children, leading to their investment of private tuition or even enrichment classes before they even start schooling.

The Education Minister Ong Ye Kyung mentioned in a recent speech, "the paradox of meritocracy lies in the fact that the more it works, the more it looks like systemic unfairness, as a growing upper-middle class means that poorer Singaporeans see their opportunities diminished."
Singapore is seeing an increasing disparity between the financial status of households in Singapore, and the academic opportunities given to students from those who are not as affluent are as predicted: they just don't perform as well as their wealthier counterparts. In a bid to balance the difference in socio-economic status, (MOE) consistently reviews their existing grants and financial aid policies for those lower-income families.

On the other hand, South Korea's reason for their rigorous academic regiment is rather simple: Passion. The zealousness for education and egalitarianism (Csizmazia, 2017) pushes the Koreans to strive for what they can achieve, and sometimes it blinds them into forgetting that the lower-income family simply cannot afford to maintain that kind of passion to pursue education.
Whilst the root cause for Singaporeans was mostly competition born out of the need to keep up with the ever-changing economy, Koreans' root cause was the "age-old Confucian belief that man is perfectible through education and that only the most learned should govern the country and society (Kim-Renaud, n.d)." Ever since then, Koreans have grown to prioritise education over issues that should not be overlooked, like mental health as previously discussed.

Despite successfully relying on education to produce highly skilled human capital to drive growth in the past, we have also pointed out its flaws such as income inequality and high academic pressure that leads to mental health issues that exist within the Korean education system that needs urgent consideration from the Korean government. By comparing it with Singapore's education system, we are able to see how despite utilizing a similar 'formula' to achieve economic success, the two have different motivati ons in promoting an 'overachieving' attitude, which ultimately means the root causes to both system's problems need to take on different approaches. Its flaws are certainly difficult problems the South Korean government has to resolve, but it's necessary f or South Korea to remain relevant and sustainable in this fast-changing world.



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ISSUES CHALLENGING SOUTH KOREA'S YOUTH: THE NEED TO REDEFINE SOCIETY



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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the main problems that the youth in South Korea face. South Korea is a country with deep-rooted Confucian traditions that emphasizes hierarchy and the importance of familial relations between people. This long-standing culture has resulted in the inequality and imbalance of power that the youth face in today's society. In addition, the youth face the brunt of traditional behaviors like ' Gapjil ' - workplace bullying and even bullying in schools. While the youth have grown tolerant of such practices, they are starting to become more forthcoming in their fight against these problems. However, while the youth can take action , there needs to be support from the government in a consolidated effort for change.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, South Korea, as a democracy, has much to be proud of. The country had transitioned from military rule to a full-fledged democracy within the span of decades. As the 11th largest economy in the world, and global leader in entertainment, Korea has widespread influence on the international stage. Like any other first world country, Koreans enjoy a 97.9% literacy rate, full-fledged democracy, and robust infrastructure capable of supporting its citizens. However, young Koreans today are growing increasingly frustrated in today's reality. They are subjected to societal issues such as inequality, workplace gapjil and school violence running rampant and unconstrained. Such issues have detrimental impacts on Korean youths, who have grown up in the 'compressed modernity era' (Armstrong, 2014), miles away from the war-torn, democracy-seeking generations of the past. According to a South Korean government report, South Korean children are the least happy in study among developed countries. The reason for their unhappiness was attributed to the country's education pressure cooker system that often boils undue stress on younger generations (Park, 2014). Apart from education, youth employment and income inequality remain as painful points, aggravated by cultural norms and societal expectations in the 21st century.

This paper therefore aims to investigate the following questions: (1) what are the concerns and priorities of young Koreans today, and (2) how can they address such issues and advocate for systemic reform? In investigating these core questions, this paper focuses on three problematic aspects of Korean society through the eyes of youths: (1) inequality, (2) school violence and (3) workplace gapjil.

A GENERATION DIVIDED

While generational divides occur across every country, South Korea's youths are in a unique position. Having grown up in the post-democracy era, today's youth enjoy higher standards of education, which resulted in greater political awareness regarding the government's handling of the country. Older generations who have lived through the Korean War and battle for democracy, however, are critical of today's youth. In their opinion, Korean youths simply do not possess the traditional values of filial piety and familial support, rendering South Korea's old to a life of poverty (Williams, 2020). Older generations also believe that the solution to Korean youths' problems is to put in more effort (Fifield, 2016). This highlights a disconnect between the younger and older generations.

Younger Koreans have grown up socialised to express and voice their demands, interests and expectations through the Westernised education system and mass media channels (Shin, Rutkowski & Park, 2003; Lee, 2003). The departure from traditional familial ideals has also emerged as Korean youths are less family-focused, unlike traditional Confucian values where family is extremely valued. The youth have started drifting from such conventional traditions and the generational divide is further cemented due to a difference in ideological thinking. Unfortunately, Korean youths today are called the 'sampo generation' (meaning 'three give up' generation, as they reject traditional paths of relationships, marriage and children due to the limited job opportunities and high cost of living (Williams, 2020).

Online advocacy championing social justice has been gaining traction in recent years (especially in the cases of calling out perpetrators). Against the backdrop of political orientation, older generations tend to favour the conservatives (crediting them for Korea's rapid economic success), while younger generations (Generation 586) tend to vote for the Democrats (due to the fight for democracy in the 1980s) (Lee, 2021). However, both older and younger generations tend to scold and preach to South Korean youths in their 20s and 30s. From their perspective, youths in this age group do not have to face any similar challenges (such as borrowing foreign currency or risking death for political beliefs). Therefore, they see the youth's complaints as baseless whining. On the other hand, younger Koreans have lost hope in Moon's promises and feel betrayed as critical reform figures have stopped short of achieving their goals.

MID-YOUTH CRISIS

Today, Korean youths are growing increasingly disillusioned with many aspects of life (from job prospects to education and injustice). Unlike older generations who saw the brutality of the Korean War, Korean youths have a new battle - confronting social injustice, exploitation and manipulation. They are highly critical because of the unfair lack of opportunities provided for them. In particular, many Korean youths believe that Korean society needs to confront a "deep-rooted evil" that has plagued the nation and remain highly sensitive to social injustice in all aspects of life (Lee, 2021).

One such case is the favourable outcomes of the recent Presidential elections in favour of Moon Jae-In, a Democrat. Many young voters had supported the impeachment of former President Park Geun-hye; and subscribed to President Moon's electoral promises of "equal opportunity, fair process, and righteous result." However, President Moon has failed to deliver on his electoral promises, and crucially resolve the core social problems in the first world nation (Lee, 2021).

To date, the government's current measures to address important social problems remain stagnant and inadequate. Therefore, the root causes of such issues are not resolved, perpetuating a continuous negative cycle, reinforced by Korea's cultural norms and traditions. In such situations, Korean youths are becoming increasingly skeptical and cynical towards the government's ability to systematically ensure an even playing field for them to grow in. Hence, many youths in Korea today are slowly advocating for systemic reform, collective action, and solidarity in calls for action. In particular, Korean youths believe in the high level of political engagement present in society, with a growing awareness of how collective action can galvanise change.

While their advocacy has resulted in some awareness and reform, Korean society continues to be gridlocked, constrained by the lack of meritocracy and reinforcement of cultural norms. Ironically, public office jobs are still considered the gold standard for youths, due to their lifelong benefits and "no-retrenchment" philosophy. Such benefits are not provided by private companies, increasing the incentive for Korean youths to enter the civil service despite their cynicism.

INEQUALITY:

A MERITOCRATIC NIGHTMARE

According to the United Nations, inequality is defined as “the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities” (United Nations, 2015). In a first world country like Korea, the nation is severely afflicted with three main inequality issues: (1) class inequality, (2) income inequality, and (3) educational inequality. From these three root causes stem Korea’s current complex social injustice issues in a continuous cycle of social injustice. The polarisation of Korean society along class divides, economic ties and social hierarchies are further exacerbated by Korea’s longstanding cultural norms and traditions.

In the fight for a place in society, young Koreans face a multitude of problems. According to a study conducted by Hyundai Research Institute, the five major issues faced by Korean youths today are: (1) alienation from work, (2) ballooning debt, (3) shrinking income, (4) spending constraints and (5) increasing fatigue (Ahn, 2018). In 2020, South Korea’s unemployment rate soared to 8.07%, the highest since 1999, as the already-competitive job market was affected severely by the coronavirus (Kim, 2021).

According to statistics from the Korea Labor Institute, there has been an increase in “irregular” jobs that offer no security and no benefits, since the economic slowdown (Fifield, 2016). Furthermore, income disparity has widened since President Moon Jae-In took office. The top-income bracket now earns 5.5 times more than the bottom bracket, compared with 4.9 times before his inauguration. As of 2020, Korea has a poverty rate of 17.4%, second only to the United States (Kim, 2020). As the middle classes start to collapse into lower income brackets amid inflation and a competitive job economy.

INCOME INEQUALITY

Income inequality remains the bane of Korean society as the most entrenched social problem plaguing Korean youths. The absence of meritocracy in opportunities, employment and education is also aggravated by Korean cultural norms of hierarchy and emphasis on status. The current situation remains stagnant as current government measures are insufficient in addressing income inequality.

GOVERNMENT FAILURES

Since his election, President Moon's administration has been pursuing an "income- driven growth", aimed at reducing income inequality and raising low-income wages. While the policy has increased the minimum wage by 16.4% and 10.9% in 2018 and 2019 respectively (Sung, 2019), employment figures and the labour market have declined. In 2018, the average year-on year employment growth was 100,000, a far cry from the 300,000 in 2017. The share of unemployed households in the bottom 20% income tier increased from 43.6% in 2017 to 55.7% in 2018. Despite the well-intended policy, minimum wage jobs have disappeared, wrestling in a significant decrease in labour income and total income. In 2018, it was noted that there was a 36.8% decrease in year-on-year labor income for the bottom income tier (20%). As Korea's domestic economic growth slowed to 2.7%, as compared to 3.1%, Moon's economic policy translates into the further exacerbation of income inequality. Lower-income Koreans are now subjected to insecure job opportunities and have experienced severe income loss.

Korean youths have used the term "Hell Joseon", to describe Korea's increasing inequality, dictated by the rich and powerful. The term is derived from the Joseon Dynasty, a five century-period in which a feudal class system was the sole determinant in granting Koreans opportunities, deciding who did and did not get any opportunities to climb the social ladder. Today, it is a harsh reality that Korean youths have to confront. The term 'Hell Joseon' has been gaining traction since 2015, with online platforms and websites dedicating to lamenting "the long working hours, the high suicide rate and even the high price of snacks" (Fifield, 2016). However, the term "Hell Joseon" is also problematic in its own definition. While the term has been used to criticise the current socio-economic status of South Korea, it does not demand any political action from the government. Therefore, it reduces the incentive for any actual positive collective reform in the system to address the lack of meritocracy in Korean society.



A SHRINKING MIDDLE CLASS

According to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the middle class in Korea in 2019 accounted for 58.3% of the population, a far cry from 67.9% in 2015 (Jhoo, 2019). The shrinking middle class is indicative of the increasing polarisation between the 'golden spoons' and 'dirt spoons'. With growing evidence of the gap, domestic demand and consumption are weakening and firms are also reducing their investment and hiring, limiting job opportunities for youths.

Government intervention in the form of redistribution policies is also lacking in achieving its intended outcome (Yoon, 2015; Yoon et al, 2015). More middle-class households are moving from middle to low income classes. In comparison to other countries, Korea's income-redistribution policy has minimal effect as social mobility and class movement before and after intervention stood at only 0.01%, as compared to 2.0% in other OECD countries.

Aside from Korea's shrinking middle-income bracket, the inability and competition between large conglomerates and small enterprises are reflective of an acute dichotomy of the ongoing discrepancy. This phenomenon can be traced historically. In the past, previous government administrations lent financial and infrastructural support to chaebols, in order to globalise the domestic economy. However, this long-term partnership historically leaves smaller businesses domestically oriented, less technologically competent and less profitable in comparison to chaebols (Choong, 2019).

Unsurprisingly, Korean SMEs are dubbed "998833," (responsible for 99% of Korea's business establishments, 88% of total jobs, but are only 33% as productive compared to big conglomerates). SME workers face lower salaries and non-regular working contracts, perpetuating a culture of work insecurity as they are deprived of pension, insurance and retirement compensation privileges that are normally provided to conglomerate employees.

This highlights how wage dispersion and limited redistribution between different industries and company sizes generates high wage inequality. Redistribution policies such as taxes and benefits in South Korea are also weaker as compared to other OECD countries, along with a high gender income disparity where males earn significantly more than females (OECD, 2020).

According to Choong (2019), there are three 'divides' that contribute to income inequality. First, the income divide between regular and non-regular workers in Korea. In comparison to other OECD countries (11%), non-regular workers in Korea constitute over 20% of the total employment. Non-regular workers also earn 33.7%1 lesser than a regular worker, and less likely to enjoy social benefits or job training. The second divide refers to the fragmentation of domestic-based and technologically outdated SMEs. As a result of these factors, there is a productivity difference that translates into a difference in income. The third divide is the globalisation imbalance between resource-rich conglomerates and domestic-marketed SMEs. This highlights that "neo-liberalization of the Korean economy" led to a rapid increase in income inequality.

INEQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Despite high educational achievements, young people in South Korea are either unemployed or working in poor conditions. The employment rate of young Koreans remains below the OECD average. In 2017, 42% of youths aged 15-29 years old were employed, as compared to the OECD average of 53% (OECD, 2019). However, young Koreans are becoming increasingly worried about youth unemployment due to the upward trend (7.1% in 2008 to 9.5% in 2018). Many participate and invest in informal education or spend a long time preparing for company entry exams, because of optimal and advantageous job and wage conditions at large conglomerates as compared to SMEs. Despite all the investment in education, few succeed in obtaining high quality jobs in large enterprises, and in securing a job at all.

‘SOCAL CARTEL’ AND THE KOREA’S SPOON CLASS DEBATE (수저 계급론)

In terms of Korean cultural norms, the situation has been described as a ‘social cartel’ where the rich and connected ‘golden spoons’ gain unfair access to opportunities and a variety of pathways. On the other hand, ‘dirt spoons’ are individuals who are constrained by their social environments, unable to climb the social ladder and access better opportunities. (Choi & Park, 2019). These individuals often work long hours in low-paying jobs without benefits (Washington Post). The economic polarisation between ‘golden spoons’ and ‘dirt spoons’ have severe implications in polarising classes against each other2.

The reflection of the ‘golden spoon’ debate, highlights the bitterness among the ‘dirt spoons”. An example of the ‘golden spoon advantage’ is the appointment scandal of former Justice Minister Cho Kuk by President Moon, amid growing allegations of unfair privilege and irregularities granted to Cho’s family. Cho’s position as a member of the political elite placed him in a position where exploitation and manipulation of the system can take place. The scandal came to light as Cho’s daughter published an academic paper despite being a two-week intern during her high school years. As Korean youths in particular remain sensitive about class privilege and unfairness, the widening gap between rich and poor as a legacy of rapid economic growth is a particular pain point (Lee, 2019). President Moon’s handling of the issue further incited public anger, especially for students, who saw Moon’s actions as an act of betrayal. Cho’s scandal fueled outrage about the ‘golden spoon children” of the elites, who were able to access many opportunities while “leaving their “dirt spoon” peers to struggle in South Korea’s hobbled economy” (Choe, 2019).

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

In South Korea, it is an unspoken cultural norm for one to gain the highest level of education, often in the form of a degree. Inequality arises when connections are exploited. Children who are not from prestigious schools are vulnerable to discrimination and school violence, simply on the basis of their background. Korea's success has been fueled by their education system and a hardworking workforce. Therefore, Korean society has insofar placed extreme emphasis and significance on one's schooling and its ties to better quality of life. Children are pressured from young to excel in education as the only pathway to a good future, and children who successfully weather through such stressful circumstances are considered industrious and tenacious (IES, 2021). Such stress is reinforced through familial expectations of academic success, and the practice of education hagwons, in which children and youths are subjected to hours on end in preparation for major exams. However, this belief has negative impacts on mental health, leading to high suicide rates and mental health issues among Korean youths today.

In education, inequality exists through "Hakbeol" (학벌), a South Korean social construct referring to one's place in a hierarchical undergraduate system in South Korea, where social rankings are emphasised through educational success (Garrison et al, 2017). The hakbeol ranking system refers to a hierarchical university system based on reputation in Korea. Individuals are evaluated based on this 'class undergraduate' classification system, resulting in such individuals developing mental health problems associated with the pursuit of prestigious hakbeol. A study conducted highlighted findings that the pressure to succeed despite the uneven playing field, combined with perceptions of economic and social failure exacerbate mental health issues (Garrison, Kim & Liu, 2018). In addition, Korean cultural norms of filial piety and bringing honour are heavy expectations for Korean youths.

However, the situation has gone out of hand and expenses on private after-school teaching academies (hagwons) and other private tuition now amount to 1.1% of GDP (OECD, 2019). Expenditure on hagwons equate to 5.4% of Korea's GDP in 2016, and account for 20% of household income. Around 75% of children attend a hagwon once they start their educational journey. Additionally, the high percentage of youths in informal education signifies that young Koreans think that the formal education system is inadequate in preparing them for success, as while employers hold potential candidates to high formal educational achievements, it is insufficient in measuring someone's skill. South Koreans typically view education as the key for social mobility. However, South Korea's Confucian-Western style has systemic flaws in being too narrowly focused on knowledge, disregarding creativity and independent thought. As a result, graduates lack employable skills and knowledge of the modern economy.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Recently, many notable figures in Korea have made headlines due to allegations of being perpetrators of ‘school violence’ when they were students (Kim, 2021). The revelations continue to pour in as more victims come forward with their own story of abuse at the hands of these celebrities. In order to understand the reason for the outrage, we would be delving into the topic of school violence that have permeated supposed ‘safe’ spaces like schools for the better half of a decade.

School violence has been identified as a key cause of concern in South Korea as the forms of bullying continue to evolve with time (Kim et al., 2019). Violence, also known as hagpog (학폭), committed in school is categorised as any form of verbal, physical and psychological abuse inflicted upon a person ranging from name-calling and sexual taunts to extreme harassment and racially motivated attacks. Bullying is considered a subcategory of ‘violence’ and is used to refer to a more targeted display of aggressive behaviour directed towards one particular individual who is unable to resist such attacks, therefore praying on more vulnerable groups (Lee, 2003).

RECENT STATISTICS

According to an annual report by the education ministry, the number of victims from school violence has risen over the years from 0.9% in 2017 to 1.6% in 2019 ("School violence up for 3rd year: report", 2021). At least 1 in 100 students from elementary, middle and high schools in Korea have witnessed or suffered from a form of school bullying in the past two semesters. Inflictors of the violence were most often fellow classmates (48.7%) and took place either in classrooms (30.6%) or corridors (14.5%) (Kim, 2021).

TYPES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The most common forms of school bullying are verbal aggression (34.7%), group ostracism (17.2%) and cyber-bullying at 10.8%, with physical bullying coming close at 10% (Kim et al., 2019). Group bullying has observed a sharp increase of 6% from 2018 and is said to be a lead trigger for other forms of school violence like verbal abuse and cyberbullying (Kim, 2021). This is exemplified by a form of bullying commonly highlighted in Korea known as wangtta (왕따). A type of silent bullying that refers to exclusion of an individual from a group. It is classified as a repeated pain-inflicting behaviour that targets one physically and psychologically, with the victim typically being in a lower social standing or having violated a preconceived rule (Lee, 2003). Therefore, being labelled as such results in complete isolation from peers. Another note is the term il- jin (일진) which used to be what they called gangsters in Korea but is now used to refer to bad kids in schools, otherwise known as the school bully (Sng , 2021).

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

The reasons behind why a student commits school violence is attributed to a variety of factors. For one, Korean people may not view bullying as a serious offence and instead trust that the kids are able to sort it out among themselves. It is seen as a way to toughen up one's character and dubbed as a so-called "learning experience" as part of growing up (Lee, 2003).

Korea is also known for its rigorous education system that leaves little time for students to rest or be alone. Korean children are estimated to spend around 16 hours or more at school daily and are often enrolled in after-school preparatory programs called hagwons or cram schools (Roach, 2021). According to a survey by Korea's National Policy Institute in 2014, almost 53% of high school students are sleep deprived and 90% have less than two hours of free time on the weekdays. Students spending extended periods of time with each other breed unhealthy pressure cooker environments that may result in hostile situations and disagreements that could be birthed from pure circumstance. The lack of a holistic education and intense preparations for a singular exam that could determine an individual's fate places an insurmountable amount of pressure on students to perform well. Therefore, the learning environment as a whole not only encourages such behaviours to occur but gives no room for students to escape even in dire situations.

School violence or instances of bullying can also boil down to an individual's intention to do so. It was recorded that 34% of bullies in secondary schools "enjoy" bullying and derive pleasure from inflicting pain onto others (Lee, 2003). It can also be a premeditated action with the aim to cause fear and distress among those targeted. It has also been observed that bullying is sustained over a long period and is a pattern of repeated abuse and harassment.

Due to "hidden" forms of bullying like wangtta, victims find it difficult to come forward with their stories and speak up on the current situation (Lee, 2003). This makes it difficult to identify and put an end to such behaviours in classrooms. The hidden nature of such acts of school violence makes it harder to approach the topic and address it directly, leaving lapses in measures to tackle incidences of bullying in schools. The difficulty in reporting acts of violence extends to bystanders who may witness the abuse but are reluctant to come forward due to the possibility of being ostracised for speaking out against the bullies.

LACK OF REPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Even with reported cases of abuse, teachers may be reluctant to bring up the abuse due to concerns that it may damage the school's reputation and are not willing to take accountability for it. Victims have often cited the lack of support from school faculty (teachers and head staff) in reigning in bullying in classrooms. Many a times, despite previous suicide cases due to bullying, schools ignore concerns raised by students and parents in order to "save face" and protect the school's reputation.

Many have also pointed out the inadequacy of laws and legislatures currently in place to address the problem of violence in schools. For this, we can look to the implementation of closed-circuit cameras and security personnel in response to public outcry. The measures did little to elevate the problem. A victim had stated in his suicide note that he was beaten in blind spots, out of reach of security cameras. Additionally, it was found that 93% of security camera footage are of low resolution and not useful in identifying bullies ("S. Korea struggles to save students from bullying", 2021). Even though there have been preventive measures organised by law enforcement such as honour codes, road safety patrols, in-class prevention talks and personal guidance sessions with problematic students, it is still insufficient to address the entire breadth of the issue that goes far deeper (Kwon & Kim, 2015).

More often than not, Korean schools rely on a punishment approach to address bullying cases. Therefore, the punishment could be in the form of receiving more homework, detention or staying back after school to complete miscellaneous tasks (Lee, 2003). However, they are generally against suspending or expelling students because of concerns that it does not resolve the issue but instead just leaves them out of school without proper education. Despite this, some may argue that this approach is in and of itself a form of bullying, as it continues the cycle of inflicting physical and psychological pain onto those with less power. It brings into question the benefits of this system of retribution and whether it helps to ease tensions or resolve the situation at all.

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The case of school violence that rocked the nation involved a 13-year-old boy known as Lim Seung-min. He committed suicide after repeated abuse by boys in his class who committed multiple heinous acts of violence against him, some of which include burning him with lighters, wrapping an electrical wire around his neck as a “leash” and forcing him to expose his genitals to the entire class as a form of degrading “humiliation” (Hancocks, 2021). Lim Jee-young, his mother, details how initially, the school tried to cover up the incident even though a similar case had occurred with a girl in the same grade who also took her own life due to severe bullying. In response to this, the government introduced new counter-bullying measures that consist of compulsory suspensions of the guilty party and lowering the age students can face criminal prosecution from 14 to 12 (Hancocks, 2021). They also encouraged schools to hold more sports events to promote greater levels of team bonding among students and stress that most schools now have counselling services known as We, Education, Emotion (WEE).

However, these measures do not directly address what school faculty can do in response to such school violence cases, leaving most of the onus on students to sort the issue out amongst themselves. The case highlighted how teachers tried to bury the incident instead of reporting it to authorities, which is concerning because of the degree of abuse that took place. A study on South Korean teachers’ response to bullying incidents found that having anti-bullying policies and programmes at school did not make much of a difference in how teachers respond to such incidents which was to go to a bully’s parents about their child’s behaviour (0.815) or merely telling them that the behaviour would not be tolerated in school (0.762) (Yoon et al., 2011). Referring the behaviour to administrators showed a significantly lesser amount at 0.58. The results bring into question the effectiveness of the measures implemented by the government and whether school staff are held accountable for their role in the abuse that occurs in their premises.

CONSEQUENCES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The severity of such cases have had significant effects on the physical and psychological health of students. According to the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, students who have suffered from school bullying are at higher risk of suicide ideation or suicidal behaviour. In Korea, studies have directly linked school violence as one of the major factors for suicide in teenagers (Lee et al., 2021). In a model testing the link between school violence and perceptions of peer support (measuring adolescent happiness and suicidal ideation), it was found that a reduced amount of school violence and increased peer support reduces the likelihood of attempts at suicide or suicidal ideation (Choi et al., 2014). This reflects the significant long-lasting psychological effect of school violence on victims who may not have the support they need to overcome the trauma inflicted upon them.

The collective outrage against school violence has birthed a new social movement in Korea calling out abusers and bullies with an il-jin past. Particularly, bullies who have gone on to become celebrities. It had begun with the allegations of abuse brought out against Jae-yeong Lee and Da-yeong Lee, South Korea’s most popular volleyball athletes. The callouts and public outrage against those identified have resulted in suspension of activities for many and being dropped from major projects. Despite this, many victims who have come forward say that mere apologies are not enough for the emotional and physical torture they were subjected to go through.

WORKPLACE BULLYING: A CULTURE OF GAPGIL IN SOUTH KOREA

The culture of workplace bullying is termed as ‘ Gapgil ’ in South Korea. It is a social phenomenon that has been long accepted as a cultural and social practice. The origins of ‘ gapjil ’ can be traced back to the roots of Confucianism whereby the hierarchy between senior and junior is emphasized. Jun, Kim and Rowley (2018) explained in their article that ‘ Gapjil ’ is a heavy-handed manner of conduct, abuse of power, looking down on subordinates and the act of bossing people around. The term originates from the contracted term ‘gap’ (a party who leads) and ‘ eul ’ (the other party who is led) (p. 535). This reflects how ‘ gapgil ’ in the South Korean workplace is embedded due to the strict adherence to hierarchical norms and rules. Where the senior of a higher position uses workplace bullying and harassment against the junior of a lower position without suffering the consequences of the acts. Instead, these acts of ‘ gapjil ’ tend to be tolerated by its victims and the other employees who bear witness to these instances of bullying and harassment.

THE PERPETUATION OF GAPJIL

IMBALANCE OF POWER

Gapgil remains a large part of the workplace environment and is perpetuated mainly by the stark power imbalance between the senior and junior or employer and employee in the workplace. According to Lee (2019), power imbalance can be measured via the power distance score by Hofsteded; with 0 indicating the absence of a power distance and 100 is the maximum perception of power difference. South Korea scored 60 which means that it is a ‘moderately hierarchical society where people accept some degree of inherent inequality between superiors and subordinates’ (p. 305). Jun, Kim and Rowley (2018) states that the high power distance in Korea’s national and corporate culture is a feature that reveals how the less powerful members of the organizations and institutions accept that power is unequally distributed. In addition, they also highlight how people in high power distance societies like those of South Korea accept a hierarchical order in which everyone has a place in society that needs no further justification (p. 538). The sense of power that the employers possess due to the fact that they hold a higher status than their employees help to perpetuate gapjil because the employers see themselves as figures of authority in control of their dispensable employees. These employees, on the other hand, fear the consequences of resisting abuse and many choose to remain silent about the abuses. This results in a lack of consequences for those who partake in workplace bullying therefore, allowing workplace bullying to continue to occur and sustaining the culture of gapjil. Beyond just the perpetuation of gapgil, large organisations with great power imbalances also see a greater tolerance of corruption in those with less power such as those of employees and junior position holders (Jun, Kim & Rowley, 2018, p. 538).

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Gapjil behaviour is also attributed to psychological factors stemming from the obsession of the leaders to maintain a clear distance in social position against their employees within the workplace. These leaders use threatening communication and attacks against lower-level employees to drag down their social position, hindering one’s work-related success and favourable reputations. The use of gapjil is especially prominent when leaders feel that their social position is being threatened by potential work competitors (Cho & Yoon, 2017, p. 6). According to Cho and Yoon’s research model, they deem that workplace bullying happens from an ‘unstable self-concept’ - ‘when leaders have low self-esteem, self-clarity, self-efficacy and self-compassion’. In addition, there is also the obsession with attaining social successes in the workplace such as status, power and wealth. Therefore, leaders find it in their favor to purposefully use gapjil to repress the employees under them to the extent of diminishing their social positions and hindering their development in the workplace. With the help of workplace bullying and gapjil, leaders effectively maintain a big difference in power between them and their employees. This in turn feeds their psychological need to feel empowered, giving them a greater sense of their self-worth albeit at the expense of their juniors and employees.

COLLECTIVISM

The idea of collectivism above the individual in big companies and organizations also contributes to the perpetuation of gapjil. This importance of collectivism is manifested in the way South Koreans use the term ‘woori’ which represents an emotional relatedness and translates to ‘our’ or ‘we’ in english (Lee, 2019). Seo, Leather and Coyne (2012) looks into how collectivism in South Korea places great emphasis on group benefits and prizes strong social bonds between the ‘in-group members’ but causes discrimination against the ‘out-group’. The South Koreans are encouraged to place group benefits above individualism to protect the harmony of a group. Anyone who seems different can be easily targeted and seen as a threat. Therefore, individuals are generally repressed in their thoughts and actions and conformity is valued (p. 420). While collectivism can improve workplace relations between people and increase consistency in ideas, it can also create an environment in which acts of workplace bullying is normalized and the people conform to the idea that gapjil is part of the Korean workplace culture. With the normalization of gapgil, workers tend to be more tolerant of the abuses and remain silent by-standers to the situation which perpetuates the vicious cycle of gapjil. Beyond the workplace, South Koreans are also involved in company outings termed ‘Hoesik’ which involves multiple rounds of alcohol with colleagues and bosses. Peer-pressure is often used to force workers to binge drink, however, most Korean youths have become tolerant of such activities and this practice has been normalized due to the sense of collectivism. This highlights how pervasive gapjil is in and beyond the workplace setting.

CONSEQUENCES OF GAPGIL ON SOUTH KOREAN YOUTHS

The culture of gapjil and acts of workplace bullying entails negative impacts on a victim's life especially so in their psychological health. The prevalence of gapjil in South Korean workplaces is a serious issue because a majority of Korean employees have reported that they experienced some form of bullying in the workplace. The acts of bullying and harassment can include verbal abuse, threats and even physical abuse. All of which lead to the decrease in mental well-being for employees and a poor quality of life (Lee & Yoo, 2018, p. 2). Lee and Yoo (2018) brought up a study conducted on Danish employees who were victims of workplace bullying. The study found that workplace bullying resulted in negative health problems including depressive disorders, sleep problems and an increase in sick leave which can last several years even after the bullying was stopped (p. 2).

Similarly, they highlighted a survey conducted on South Korean employees that revealed that 87% of workers have experienced workplace bullying within six months of the time they were surveyed. The most frequent acts included 'being urged to resign', 'ideas or opinions being ignored' and 'being humiliated' (p. 3). The psychological effects of such acts of bullying can be detrimental to the Korean youths who will spend a majority of their lives working under employers in hierarchical organizations. Moreover, Lee and Yoo (2018) have found in their study that Korean employees who were exposed to workplace bullying reported having more work-to-family conflict, interfering with their personal lives with their families (p. 9). Overall, organizations also suffer because the staff turnover rates increase, sick absences increase and there is an overall decrease in productivity.

CASE STUDIES OF GAPJIL

Gapjil and acts of bullying are usually used by those with a sense of higher authority and power. Some of these instances have been increasingly covered by the media and highlight the severity of gapgil. Beyond the decrease in mental well-being, some cases of gapjil end of with the suicide of the helpless victims, exposing the extent of gapgil and its effects. This media coverage and increase in awareness has incited much anger and disgust from the populace. The case studies include a look the notorious Korean Airlines family who have several gapjil allegations against them, and in another, the heart-wrenching case of the suicide of a security guard after facing severe harassments at his workplace.

KOREAN AIRLINE & WORKPLACE GAPGIL

The family of Chairman Cho of Korea Air have been in the spotlight for many allegations of workplace bullying. Firstly, Chairman Cho Yang Ho allegedly cultivated an environment where the loyalty to the Cho family was prioritized above everything else, the employees had to proclaim their loyalty by using the term 'dear' when addressing Chairman Cho and his family (Kwon, 2019). Secondly, Lee Myung-Hee, the wife of the Chairman had several allegations of abuse against her including those of assault of her gardener employee over three years. In one of the incidents, she threw a pair of metal shears at the gardener for not removing weeds properly and in another, she kicked the ladder that her employee was using and caused the gardener to fall from a height of 3 meters, hurting a knee. In another incident, she allegedly threw a 60cm vase at her staff and verbally insulted them. Some of the abuses were caught on camera and released to the public including those of her screaming at her employees and physically abusing them (Kwon, 2019). Thirdly, in the notorious case of 'nut-rage', Heather Cho, the then Korean Air vice president, was unhappy that a flight attendant served macadamia nuts to her in a closed package instead of a ceramic plate. Cho verbally and physically abused the attendance before ordering the crew chief to her seat. She ordered him to kneel and ask for forgiveness, in addition, she also struck his knuckles with a digital tablet before ordering them to get off the plane.

Here, the enforcement of gapjil behavior by Cho meant that the attendant and crew chief had to suppress their emotions and do as she ordered (Lee, 2019). The actions of the family incited public outcry as they caused emotional damage to their victims and they were eventually met with legal repercussions.

GAPJIL & SUICIDE

The case of the suicide of the then security guard, Choi was covered by South Korean media and exposed the worst of gapgil. According to a Korea JoongAng Daily article (2020), Choi took his own life after being a victim of intense and constant workplace harassment by a resident, Shim. Shim verbally abused Choi after Choi tried to push Shim's parked car to make space for others. Shim verbally abused Choi by using derogatory terms and harassed him to quit his job. On top of that, Shim also used physical violence against Choi, breaking his nose. Choi eventually filed a physical abuse complaint with the police against Shim but his lawyer had to resign from the case due to the pandemic leaving him distraught and helpless. Choi was found dead near his home much to the shock of the other residents. This case caught the attention of the Korean people and was met with strong public condemnation of gapgil practices and calls for legal punishments against Shim.

CHANGING MINDSETS OF THE YOUTH

Korean youths are growing dissatisfied and are pushing for change in power dynamics in the workplace. They have realised that suffering is no longer a prerequisite for success, and they want a more equal and respectful society that values merit and satisfaction in life rather than the traditional definition of monetary and social success. These Korean youths have now developed a disbelief and distaste for Gapjil behavior as the society is becoming more aware of the horrible consequences of Gapjil. There is now increased anger against workplace bullying and a greater desire for change of norms and culture.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

YOUTH-LED EFFORTS

The youth of South Korea have come to the forefront in the fight against gapgil. In the case of Korean Air, staff created an anonymous chat group that encouraged whistleblowing against any corruption and abuse committed by the Cho family. Following the success of the group, staff members took to the streets to protest in Seoul's Gwanghwanun square (Kwon, 2019). They also held candlelight vigil (Yonhap, 2018) and protested peacefully, amplifying the strength and determination of the Korean youth who step out beyond their comfort zone to be part of movements against gapjil.

On top of peaceful protests, Park Chang Jin, the crew chief that was forced to kneel and beg for forgiveness has become the face of movements that seek to rid South Korean workplaces of bullying. He helped to establish the Korean Airlines Employees Solidarity Labour Union (KESLU) that now has more than 400 members and following that, he set up Workplace Gapjil 119. Gapgil119 was formed in 2017 to help victims of workplace bullying by providing advice on how to fight back. Gapjil119 uses online platforms such as Kakao and email to reach out to victims of workplace bullying (Borowiec & Park).

The South Korean youth are undoubtedly more forthcoming in their fight against gapjil and have made tangible impacts by alleviating victims of their sense of helplessness in the face of gapjil. The sense of togetherness that the Korean youth are building will ultimately be a powerful tool in achieving their aims for a more respectful and equal society and moving away from the hierarchical nature of Korea past and present.

LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

Legislative changes have been made due to the increasing public attention towards workplace bullying and harassment. One of the main problems that many victims face is the sense of fear that they will lose their livelihood if they were to call out acts of gapjil. However, the new legislation that came into effect in July 2019 helps to ease the sense of helplessness that victims face. The new legislation states that employers cannot unfairly dismiss employees who report workplace harassment, those who do so will face up to 3 years in prison or a 30 million won (~$25,500) fine (Hollingsworth & Kwon, 2019).

While the new legislation criminalizes those, who take action against whistle-blowers, it does not directly criminalize workplace bullying or harassment. There is still room for even stronger protection of employees in the South Korean workplace, but the new legislation is undoubtedly a step towards a safer workplace environment.

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THE CANDLE-LIGHT REVOLUTION IN SOUTH KOREA

The use of candle-light vigils as a protest tactic have evolved over the years, becoming one of the ways South Korean use to be involved in advocacy and activist movements. Candle-light vigils involve participants holding candles or other light sources while participating in non-violent, peaceful protests. One of the key features of candle-light vigils is that it is non-violent, therefore, they are less socially destabilizing. People are more likely to join such protests because there is less fear of being arrested, in addition, it garners more legitimacy from the government and society because of its non-confrontational manner (Willis & Hwang, 2020, p. 261).

South Korea has seen a number of significant candle-light vigils such as those of the 2002 candle-light protest over the deaths of the two schoolgirls and acquittal of the two US soldiers who were responsible, the 2008 protest over President Lee Myung Bak's decision to reopen Korea's market to US beef imports during the Mad Cow Disease period and the 2016/2017 vigil for the resignation and impeachment of President Park Geun Hye (Willis & Hwang, 2020, p. 269). The same tactic was used over the years for different issues and there was an increase in the numbers of people who participated in such movements. The demographics of its participants also grew to include ordinary citizens who brought along their friends and families. The persistence of the participants in such movements have successfully helped the South Korean youth to emphasize their unhappiness through non-violent means.

Moreover, these three examples of candle-light vigils highlighted the use of the internet as a way to mobilize people. The internet and social media provide opportunities for ordinary citizens to engage with news of democratic movements (Lee, 2018). Social media was found to decrease the information gap regarding political movements and serve to better inform users of ongoing political happenings. This means that those who use social media are generally more exposed to the details of candle-light vigils, giving them the opportunity to be mobilized into joining the movement. This gives rise to the increase in the number of people on the ground at such peaceful protests. Moreover, those who are most active on social media are usually the youths. With the increase in intolerance towards the inequalities in the society, the youth are more likely to partake in movements that seek for a more equitable society and the riddance of corruption in the system.

Overall, the use of candle-light vigils allows youths to contribute to a participatory democracy in which their voice and opinions matter in the decisions made by the government. Youths are no longer willing to suffer in silence and are willing to sacrifice their time and effort to push for a society that is more suited for their growth and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS: WHAT CAN KOREAN YOUTHS DO?

There are over 8 million South Korean youths, and these young people will form the next generation of South Korean leaders and define the success of their lives and country. Although these South Korean youths might not have legislative power and authority to elicit firm and immediate changes in the society, there are actions that they can take to potentially create a society and legacy for their children and even themselves. Many youths have taken the stance that waiting for the older generation to leave will bring these issues deeply embedded in culture and outmoded traditions along with them. However, resigning to such a mentality will create a defeatist mindset for the current generation of young people, at least for the next 40-50 years. Although this belief is valid since most youth do not carry such detrimental mentalities and traditions, youths should still begin to make efforts actively to make their hopes for the future clear and push for gradual transformation and change.

LARGE-SCALE MOVEMENTS:

One remarkable movement and action that South Korean youths have carried out is the candlelight revolution. The values and principles behind this mode of peaceful protest is extremely relevant and effective for the South Korean society and political scene. Youths are able to let their voices be heard and push for change peacefully without conforming to political discourse (Bryan, 2019). However, the candlelight protests typically occur with the push of major incidents such as the Park Geun-hye corruption scandal and middle school students' deaths. Such major incidents do not always happen as issues such as gapjil and bullying often happen on a small-scale, sometimes subtle, and hidden. These incidents if overlooked, will deepen the cracks in South Koreans society. Hence, the youth should also focus on continuously tackling pertinent issues of injustice.

CHALLENGING MINDSETS:

The major action that South Koreans should focus on is to challenge current mindsets that impede on civil society's growth and progress. The key mindset to challenge for the next generation is the idea that people are organized hierarchically according to their wealth, status, educational achievement and even family background.

DARE TO VENTURE: YOUTH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In light of the systemic inequality and unnecessary overly stressful education and employment situation in South Korea, more youths should be encouraged to explore social entrepreneurship, to redefine social status and challenge the deeply entrenched belief of the education-success cause and effect, as well as the system that perpetuates the cycle of inequality for the youth. As the deeply entrenched belief system in the current education system creates an environment of inequality and constant suppression of those who are not able to attain the system-defined success, breaking out of the mindset might be more effective. By creating their own paths for success, youths are able to overcome the inequality problem slowly yet actively instead of just fixating on the disparity and lamenting about the injustice arising from outdated and rigid beliefs. They will also be able to hone the critical and creative side of themselves, without being constantly trapped in the system. Social entrepreneurship led by the youth should be a path that young people should venture in more. South Korea has been opening up to the idea of entrepreneurship in the last decade and some young social entrepreneurs have taken a brave step forward to define themselves outside the traditional system. However, many young people are still unaware about what social entrepreneurship entails and how they can explore this path. In a 2014 survey, 90% of respondents mentioned never buying or using products from a social enterprise before (Park, 2017). There needs to be more awareness especially among youth about this career avenue. Young entrepreneurs can work with schools and universities to organise a sharing session. This will be beneficial not only for those interested in exploring social entrepreneurship, but to allow youths to be more supportive of each other. With more support for challenging the status quo and with more youth taking the unconventional path, youths will be able to slowly but surely tackle the mindsets that underlie inequality and injustice in South Korean society.

WHERE SILENCE IS DEAFENING AND DETRIMENTAL

Having more conversation has and will continue to be the way forward for the youth to push for societal progress. Speaking out about issues is far better than silence, even though it might not have immediate impact. Currently, many Korean youths are aware of the injustice and societal issues; they know that this cannot and should not be the way forward for their generation and the next. Awareness is a hopeful step for change. In colleges and universities, the role of education in reducing political apathy and creating open and safe spaces for conversations is key to letting the voices of the youth be heard in public. Dialogues and forums with key industry leaders, government ministry leaders, and even among students themselves about inequality issues should be actively encouraged and participated in. Engaging in private conversations between friends and family will also reinforce the pertinence of societal issues and help youths develop passion for these issues and hone critical thinking skills. Recognising the importance of these conversations is extremely crucial for youth activism so that their opinions can be heard and challenged on a more regular basis instead of only during mass demonstrations and events. Talks and conversations of different scales should be more actively promoted in schools and among the youth.

Creative modes of conversations should also be more actively generated, such as making content videos on social media – interviews with victims of injustice, thought-provoking content and sharing successful journeys not just for the sake of entertainment but to raise awareness about real struggles and stories can be helpful in inspiring society. Social media has been established as a powerful tool to spread awareness, as seen in South Korea's candlelight demonstrations as well as campaigns all over the world. Keeping the conversations robust, dynamic and easily accessible can help the youth challenge and hopefully uproot societal issues.

MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUTH INFLUENCE

With the large and ever-growing popular culture in South Korea, there is immense potential for youths with an influential platform to use it to advocate for changes in societal issues. Many internationally famous celebrities such as singers and K-pop groups: Blackpink , BTS, EXO, NCT, IU as well as actors and actresses have a wide fanbase. The far-reach nature of their platforms and activities can bring positive impact. Influential youths can work with NGOs and government initiatives for issues such as youth mental health issues, bullying in schools etc. by showing support in the form of donations and volunteering. Those who do not face strict restrictions on the usage of their social media platforms can also regularly advocate for issues such as youth mental health, sharing words of encouragement and inspiration. As many young people look up to these celebrities, they potentially can positively impact and influence youth behavior . They can also be role models for their fans, by sharing their stories of overcoming obstacles and taking the unconventional career path and spreading the mindset of treating others with kindness and equality. As their platform is able to reach many and these youth celebrities can relate to the young people in South Korea, their potential should be invested and developed in productive and inspiring ways.

Tackling these societal issues is definitely not the sole responsibility of the youth, it requires a much more complex system of support from the government and the general population. However, all changes have to overcome obstacles, of which some are institutionalised and normalised in society and in politics. The government will need to work with the youth to support their efforts by standing with them in legislation, programmes and investments in sufficient resources.

Future research should be conducted on why current government measures are inadequate in addressing Korean youth's problems, and how South Korea can move forward in approaching such issues proactively, instead of in a reactive manner. Challenging the status quo will require youths to be very courageous and be willing to take risks and make sacrifices. In a high uncertainty avoidance society like South Korea, much like other Asian societies, this can be a big obstacle. Hierarchy and respect for elders are also highly emphasised in the Korean society; but these should be challenged properly if necessary. In the Sewol ferry tragedy, students were told to not move, because doing so would be more dangerous. 75 students onboard the ferry however, disobeyed the orders and survived by escaping the ferry (Park, 2017). This became a symbol for many youths to question the stagnation of South Korean society (Park, 2017). Having a critical mind that is able to think of solutions is key for the next generation but even more so be daring about breaking out of the traditional mindset and way of life. If the youth are able to stand together to chase after a future which they believe in, the South Korean society can make changes and progress as the country's democracy has shown receptiveness to public opinion and therefore changes.

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K-POP FAN CULTURE IN SOUTH KOREA



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K-POP FAN CULTURE IN SOUTH KOREA

South Korea is a major player in the global music industry, with it being one of the country's major cultural exports today. Ever since the Hallyu Wave started in the late 1990s, the industry has only grown and now, it churns out new artistes every day. Korean Pop, or K-Pop as it is more well known, is now spreading across the world at an unprecedented rate. What was once domestic has now become global and with that, there has been a marked increase in the size of the followings of K-pop groups and the subsequent development of a fan culture unique to K-pop.

The K-pop fan culture is one that has been created both organically and manufactured. Naturally, fans of music artistes dedicate time to listening to their music, purchasing their albums and turning up for concerts among other things. However, beyond that, the South Korean music industry has had entertainment companies of artistes capitalising upon the dedication of these fans to create ways to retain fans and increase their dedication to their idols. This is done through the creation of practices like fanchants, events like fansigns and the endless creation of merchandise that keep fans eager for more.

MANUFACTURED ASPECTS OF K-POP FAN CULTURE

The manufactured aspects of fan culture are often most easily seen in physical events and promotions, as well as official merchandise created by the entertainment agencies. This would include events like concerts, fansigns, and other outdoor performances. The event that is most unique to K-pop fan culture would be fansigns, where fans get a chance to have their albums personally signed by their idols and talk to them. Entertainment companies also create fanchants that are expected to be chanted along when idols perform. Official merchandise like lightsticks and slogans are also created by entertainment agencies to be sold to fans and brought to official events as well.

FANSIGNS

Firstly, fansigns are events which not only increase interactions between the fans and idols, but are also extremely important in helping entertainment agencies boost the sales of physical albums. The most common way to participate in fansigns would be via lottery, where each album purchase is the equivalent of one ticket into the lottery, and albums need to be purchased within a set time frame to be eligible for the fansign (harmonicar, 2016). Hence, if fans want to gain a higher chance of getting into the fansign, they will have to purchase more albums for a higher chance to get picked. Fansigns are often held once or twice weekly after idols make a comeback, also known as the promotion period for a group, which usually lasts around 2 weeks to a month.

Due to the lottery system, fans will be compelled to mass purchase their idol's albums every time they have a fansign, which easily helps to boost album sales. Furthermore, through fansigns, idols and fans are able to interact with each other at a significantly closer proximity. They can converse on a one-to-one basis, and fans can even talk about more personal topics with their favourite idols. For some groups, fans are even allowed to give the idols gifts or letters, allowing for a more personalised and intimate experience as well. Fansigns are extremely important to the K-pop fan culture, as it goes beyond raising revenue for companies. It fosters a sense of intimacy and allows fans to feel that their love for idols are reciprocated.

FANCHANTS

Secondly, another aspect of fan culture that is manufactured would be fanchants . Fanchants are phrases shouted by fans alongside performances by their favourite artistes. Entertainment companies often share the written version of the fanchants on the fancafe , as an exclusive platform which requires paid membership for exclusive content, and sometimes release guide videos of the idols doing it. Fanchants are also a way for fans to interact with their favourite groups while they are performing but it does not drown out the song itself, allowing fans to still be able to focus on the performance. Fanchants also serve as a form of encouragement for the idols. Moreover, they create a sense of unity for the fans as they cheer on their idols together. Fanchants also allow the fans to have a stake in the performances, making them feel like they are one with the idols, and this increases the intimacy that they perceive to have with the idols as well. Furthermore, while fans from other cultures and in other contexts may only scream as a form of support for performing artistes, fanchants are extremely unique to the K-pop fan culture because they are a collectively agreed-upon and identical form of support. Since fanchants are organised by the industry itself to create a greater sense of unity and organisation between the fandom, it also makes a difference to the identities of fans and allows them to feel that they belong to a unique group of people.

MERCHANDISE

Lastly, another important aspect of fan culture created by the industry is merchandise. Official K-pop merchandise is made up of a myriad of different things. They include goods that are used in official events, such as lightsticks and slogans, as well as everyday items such as public transport cards and even plastic folders. One of the most integral items most groups include in their list of merchandise is the lightstick. Lightsticks are similar to glow sticks, but they are made more special with the twist that entertainment companies put on them. This is done through the creation of unique designs, symbols and colours to represent idols and their fandom. Every idol group has its own one-of-a-kind lightstick. For example, boy-group GOT7 has a lightstick designed in the shape of a bird since their fandom name, IGOT7 sounds like “baby bird” in Korean, while girl-group Apink has a panda as their design, representing their fandom name “Pink Panda” (Soh, 2018). The K-pop fandom now uses lightsticks to display solidarity and strength, and the view of the lightsticks turned on in the arena is called an “ocean” (Sage, 2019). The “ocean”, or rather, the lightsticks, serve as the visual representation of fans supporting their idols. The colour and designs of their lightsticks serve as something that distinguishes different fandoms from each other. At events where multiple groups perform together, for example, the annual Dream Concert, which is a joint concert of K-pop groups, lightsticks serve as a way for idols to see their fans, and just like fanchants, this creates a sense of unity for the fans as well (Sage, 2019). In such events, fans can identify fellow fans through their lightsticks, and they stay together, which allows for them to feel a sense of belonging within their own fandom. This is something that is extremely unique to the K-pop fan culture, especially when we compare it to other music scenes, like the Chinese music scene in which glow sticks are given out during concerts.

Manufactured aspects of the K-pop fan culture are created by the industry to build a greater sense of unity and community among the individual fandoms. Beyond that, it creates a more cohesive and intimate bond between the idols and fans as well, as idols are largely encouraged by and dependent on fans, which in turn makes fans feel more enthusiastic when it comes to supporting them. Through these manufactured aspects of fan cultures, a stronger, tighter-knit fandom is created and from it arises fan activity such as the purchase of music which benefits artistes and their companies financially.

However, fan culture is definitely not completely created and directed by industry players alone. Fans are fans by choice and another significant aspect of fan culture is known as fan support. Fan support comes in many forms and is often an organised form of activity. Aspects of fan support to be discussed include the purchasing of albums and other merchandise, the practice of “streaming” and fan creations such as vocal and dance covers.

In the past, the purchase of physical albums used to be the norm; it was a way for fans to have access to their favourite music. Today, with the creation of music streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music, album sales are declining. In 2018, only 32 million CDs were sold, almost 100 million fewer than in 2003, and a drop of 9.6 million year-on-year (Savage, 2019). Meanwhile, the K-pop fan culture has only bucked this trend. According to the Korean Association of Music Contents, album sales reached 40.2 million as of 12 December 2020 – a 64 percent jump since 2019. Forbes also reported in 2020 that album sales were still going strong despite the Covid-19 pandemic, with over five albums selling over 1 million copies each, and one by BTS with over 4 million recorded sales (Herman, 2020). It was also noted that album sales may have risen due to fans’ desires to boost profits and minimise losses for the groups they supported, due to many physical events such as concerts and fansigns being cancelled due to the pandemic. These purchases also came after various artistes directly encouraged and requested for their fans to purchase albums to boost sales against the backdrop of the pandemic.

PHYSICAL ALBUM

Physical album sales are an integral part of the K-pop fan culture for various reasons. Firstly, entertainment companies often come up with different designs of the same album and also include random collectibles in them. As such, fans are incentivised to buy multiple copies of one album in order to obtain firstly, the album designs they like, and secondly, the collectibles of their favourite members. For example, in the 2020 NCT Resonance Pt 1 Album, fans had 2 versions to choose from. In these albums, fans would get 1 out of the 25 members' photocards at random. The probability of obtaining a desired photocard was therefore made low and fans would have to spend more if they were serious about collecting a certain photocard. Beyond photocards, albums come with other collectibles such as mini-standees, calendars and posters. Additionally, unlike their Western counterparts, K-pop albums come not only with CDs, but also with photobooks, giving fans a reason to purchase the album beyond having access to music – which they often already have access to on online platforms.

Secondly, physical album sales are an integral part of K-pop because it often determines the rankings of artistes on music shows. Music shows are weekly programmes which artistes promote their songs on by performing them in front of a live audience. Some of these programmes include Inkigayo and M! Countdown. These programmes are often streamed live on television and online, and artistes get to win awards based on their rankings. While there are a myriad of factors to win, physical album sales make up 10-15% of their total score on average. Therefore, fans often purchase albums to show their support for artistes and to give them a higher chance of a win. Dedicated fans often aim to break records for album sales in order to support artistes and to bring them media exposure. In 2021, Rosé from girl-group Blackpink, sold a whopping 400,000 copies of her albums within a mere four days of it being available for pre-order (Sng, 2021).

Physical album sales are vital to the world of K-pop, but there are more ways of showing fan support which are equally important. One such practice is that of streaming music. Often referred to simply as "streaming", it is the act of repeatedly watching a music video or replaying a song in order to increase its view or stream count. This also helps songs to climb the ranks on music charts in Korea like the Gaon Chart and Hanteo Chart. Fans take this practice seriously and there are even fan-created guides with instructions to stream in a way that ensures that their view or replay will be counted by the algorithm. For example, under various music videos, fans can often be seen telling others not to include emojis in their comments for the fear of being flagged as bots and advising others to stream on various devices instead of merely one. Streams are often a way in which fans come together and unite for a shared goal which they take seriously. In Blip, an app created for K-pop fans to monitor their idols' scheduled promotional activities, the view counts of music videos are included and push notifications are issued when videos hit certain milestones like a million views. On social media, official artiste accounts often post congratulatory pictures to celebrate when music videos hit these big numbers. In other instances, fans are encouraged to stream by the companies which make exclusive content such as dance practice videos available only when the music video reaches a certain view count. For example, in 2018, boy-group SF9 had an event on social media for their fourth mini album "Mamma Mia", enticing fans to stream because exclusive content would be released when the music video reached four million, six million and eight million views respectively. As such, fans stream religiously in order to promote their artists, help them bag awards, and unlock exclusive content.

FAN ART

The final aspect of K-pop fan culture is the creation of fanart. Fanart comes in various forms and fans leverage upon their interests, hobbies and talents to pay tribute to their favourite artistes. Some common forms of fanart are vocal and dance renditions as well as digital drawings. The widespread presence of fanart has even given entertainment agencies the opportunity to scout for new talents. In 2016 and 2017, Cube Entertainment collaborated with Soompi, one of the largest websites for the international K-pop community, to hold “Rising Legends”, a talent competition in which fans could submit their vocal and dance covers to be assessed by other fans with the winner having a chance to get a private audition at Cube Entertainment. Fanart can also be used to advertise artistes. Cup-sleeve events are events organised by fans to promote artistes by partnering with cafes to have specially designed artiste cup sleeves given to customers who purchase beverages (Foo, 2019). As such, entertainment companies are also encouraging the creation of fanart. For example, Fanbook is a platform in which fanart competitions are held by entertainment companies with exclusive prizes to be won, encouraging an outpouring of new creations and indirect publicity for artistes when these creative works are uploaded online. Fanart is one way in which fans from all over the world can express their support for artistes through their own means and with their own creative flair. While it can largely be said to be for enjoyment among fellow fans, it has also become a valuable aspect of fan culture which entertainment companies are now realising the potential of.

Fan culture in South Korea is rich and diverse, and is a culture that is highly unique to K-pop, which is known for its dedicated fans. Interestingly, it is not only the fans who drive this culture, but increasingly the industry itself which is encouraging it and pushing for its growth.



POSITIVE ASPECTS OF K-POP FAN CULTURE

There are many positive aspects of K-pop fan culture. In this portion of the essay, positive aspects will be discussed on a minor and major scale. Positive aspects of a minor scale refer to immediate benefits that individual fans and idols gain as a result of the direct interactions between them, while positive aspects of a major scale refer to benefits that other parties, beyond fans and idols, gain from riding on the support that fans render to idols.

First, on an individual level, fans find a sense of belonging within a community of like-minded individuals who share the same love for a particular idol or group. Because they consume the same content that their favorite idols put out, they share stories and language that are exclusive and unique to the particular fandom they belong to. They share jokes that fans of other singers would not be able to appreciate. For example, BTS fans can joke with each other about member J-hope's "calm down, calm down, my daughter," which he said to fellow member Rap Monster in the skit "House of Army," a show that BTS put up just for their fans, known as ARMYs (marshmallow wolf, 2017). Such shows are unlikely to be consumed by the general public since its target audience is mainly the fans of BTS. Hence, such content would be something only understood and of interest to fans only, and their solidarity would be strengthened.

The next positive aspect of K-pop fan culture is derived from fancams, for they allow other fans to have better views of their favorite idols' performances. Fans who are physically present at performances may take videos of their favorite idols and upload them on video-sharing sites like Youtube for fans who are not physically present to consume such content, and these fancams can be much better in showcasing idols' performances than official videos. This is because official videos sometimes do not fully focus on capturing the performances, zooming out from time to time to capture audience reactions or the stage setup, or not capturing certain members of a group. Thus, fancams fill the gap of letting other fans who are not physically present at these performances still enjoy the same experience of watching their beloved idols as those that are physically present.

The last positive aspect of a minor scale that will be demonstrated is that struggling K-pop idols gain much needed mainstream popularity from their fans. A particularly famous example is in the case of girl group EXID, which successfully got out of their "nugu," meaning "nobody," status through a viral fancam of their member Hani. The group had been on the verge of disbandment, but thanks to the fancam, the group "greatly received a boost in popularity," as seen in how it "participated in shows such as Weekly Idol and Gag Concert," two popular variety shows. (Belmis, 2021; Elaine, 2015). Having moved up the ranks of girl groups, EXID is a classic case of a group that has very much benefitted from their loyal fans, and this shows how crucial fans are to determining their beloved idols' popularity.

But alongside the benefits that fans and idols gain from the close relationship they share, there are other beneficiaries that also profit from K-pop fans' support of their idols. This is due to K-pop fans extending their support of idols to other arenas, after these idols' music first drew them in to become fans. Benefits arising from K-pop fan culture can be seen in the political, social, and economic arenas as well, and these are the positive aspects of a major scale.

ECONOMIC

Crucially, the economy greatly benefits from the K-pop idol-fan relationship. In the aspect of consumerism, fans buy the merchandise, albums, and concert tickets of their cherished idols and patronize places around Korea that K-pop idols feature and promote to fans. Under headings such as Seoul Cafe Tour with Seventeen, Seven Colored Seoul Introduced by BTS, and NCT's 'Hot & Young Seoul Trip', fans are attracted to explore Korea through their favorite idols. Additionally, fans visit eateries opened by their beloved idols, such as Kamong Cafe by EXO's Kai and Ossu Seiromushi by BTS' Jin, boosting the economy.

In the aspect of tourism, K-pop's popularity overseas has led to a huge influx of tourists visiting Korea. This has given rise to K-pop tour packages, which bring visitors "on a cultural tour of Seoul as well as a tour of Mnet TV studios famous for shooting many of the famous K-pop stars" (Lonely Planet Writer, 2016). It was even acknowledged in 2019 that "K-pop [was] one significant factor that contributed to growth in the number of individual tourists," whose proportion rose to 98% from 50% and signified "a shift from tour groups to individual tourists" (Bi, 2019). This shift is significant to note, since tour groups would not concentrate on K-pop tourism, whereas individual tourists may have been overseas K-pop fans who visited Seoul, where K-pop activities mainly take place, largely out of love for K-pop idols.

Moreover, the economy benefits from K-pop fans' interests in other things outside K-pop. When idols are casted in dramas and musicals, they invite fans to consume these alternative entertainment offerings. For dramas, producers are unable to "ignore" K-pop idols' "marketability overseas and the amount of media attention they bring," and therefore cast them to increase viewership (KayRosa, 2021). In particular, if K-pop idols are popular outside Korea, the copyrights of drama productions can be sold overseas, bringing revenue to Korea's economy (AKP staff, 2021).

In the same vein, "K-pop casting has become the No. 1 criteria" that determines ticket sales for musicals (Healy, 2013). This is because K-pop stars especially bring in Japanese and Chinese tourists which musicals desperately need for their growth (Healy, 2013). Fans watch musicals because their favorite idols are in them. For some fans, watching their favorite idols in musicals serves as an entry point to becoming interested in musicals as a whole. This was seen in the case of a fan of JYJ's Junsu, who first "started to attend musicals just because of" the star, but eventually became an "avowed musical enthusiast, attending even those not starring" the idol (Agency, 2020). Thus, the economy once again stands to benefit from the revenue that musicals bring, among other forms of entertainment which idols are involved in.

POLITICAL & SOCIAL

As an extension of being interested in other things closely linked to their favorite idols, K-pop fans even become involved in political and social activism which at first glance seems rather distant from K-pop stars. This can be attributed to two causes. Firstly, "self-love and social consciousness" are "often repeated in K-pop lyrics," influencing fans to care about socio-political issues around them (Bruner, 2020). Secondly, being "young and tech-savvy," due to them being "millennials and from the Gen-Z generation," K-pop fans desire to fight for their futures (Beh, 2021).

In the name of supporting their favorite group or idol, K-pop fans rally together to support political and social causes. For example, the BTS fandom, ARMYs, followed the kind deed that their beloved idol group did, "collectively rais[ing] over $1 million for Black Lives Matter" to match BTS's own $1 million donation" (Bruner, 2020). ARMYs have also "planted tens of thousands of trees" from Korea to the Philippines "in the name of their celebrities" (Beh, 2021).

Alongside larger causes of activism, fans engage in activism for causes pertaining to people in need, which are of a smaller scale. For example, Super Junior's fandom, E.L.F, donated rice and ramen to the Salvation Army to mark the 11th Anniversary of the group's debut (Hemmeke, 2017). Fans of other idols have also "built schools, donated blood, and set up a book café," in addition to raising "millions of won toward a range of causes, from funding cochlear implants for low-income children to digging wells in Africa" (Hemmeke, 2017).

Summing up, beneath all these positive aspects of K-pop fan culture is the underlying unity of fans within a fandom. When K-pop fans stand in solidarity, they can better support each other, their idols, as well as other people outside the idol-fan relationship. Unfortunately, framing fan culture as being only positive would present a skewed, narrow perspective, because there are also negative aspects of K-pop fan culture.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF K-POP FAN CULTURE

All of the fame and positive reception towards K-pop comes with a price, and this is in the form of activities and incidents that threaten the reputation of K-Pop and its fan culture. This portion of the essay will present four major downsides to the fan culture in K-Pop - obsessive fans, cyber-vigilantism, fan wars and criticism directed by fans towards the idols themselves.

OBSESSIVE FANS

The first and most prominent issue with K-pop fan culture comes in the form of obsessive fans or superfans. These fans are also known as sasaengs, which means “private life” and the term is used with reference to how these fans intrude upon their idol’s private matters. These superfans are not only obsessive, but sometimes even behave in a stalker-like manner, going as far as hiring vehicles to follow their idols to their scheduled activities or personal appointments. These superfans usually put their own reputation and even lives at risk if it means that they can make a lasting impact on their favourites. For instance, a superfan slapped “[JYJ’s] Yoochun when he was leaving [a] hair salon” and she claimed that her rationale for doing so was “so that he could remember her that way” (halves-in-union, 2012). With the increasing prevalence of social media, idols become easily accessible via social media (either via their company’s promotional accounts or via their own personal accounts), which facilitates the process of information collection by the sasaengs (Cho, 2019). The private information that these sasaengs gather is sometimes even sold online on platforms such as Twitter, KakaoTalk and Instagram. This information includes but is not limited to: home addresses, mobile numbers, flight details, personal social media accounts, credit card numbers, audio and video recordings. In addition to this private information, some sellers may also offer to sell the methods they used to obtain the information. The issue with the sale and purchase of such information is that since these transactions are mostly “made online using one-time KakaoTalk or Twitter accounts, it is almost impossible for agencies to track down how the information is leaked and traded” (Hong, 2020).

There is also a conflict that arises between the fear that the “sasaengs will reveal sensitive information about the idols”, and the agencies’ hesitation to treat the sasaengs unfavourably for fear of losing their support since they are also considered fans (Dong, 2018). As K-pop is heavily fan-based and fans ultimately determine how successful the idols can be, there is a dilemma as to how to manage them without risking offending and losing them. The general culture of fans “considering themselves more of companions in a horizontal relationship” with their idols further worsens this dilemma (Cho, 2019). Fortunately, these days agencies are “taking tougher actions to better protect their artists under [a] no-tolerance policy” (Hong, 2020). Blacklisting is one of the more popular actions taken against sasaeng fans; blacklisted fans “are not allowed to attend events, and the list is disclosed through the official fan community for heightened scrutiny” (Hong, 2020). However, these actions are largely undertaken by big entertainment companies with veteran artistes; rookie ones still face the issue of sasaeng fans due to a lack of influence and standing. Agencies often turn a blind eye to these breaches of privacy early on in their artistes’ careers and it is not encouraged to deal with these issues too harshly from the very beginning. To make matters worse, South Korea does not have strict laws enforced to curb the issue of stalking. The act of stalking is a “minor offence” punishable with a small fine of less than 100 000 won (around 89 USD) unless the act leads to more serious consequences such as assault/physical threat to safety (Dong, 2019; Hong, 2020). It is an undeniable fact that fans play an integral role in the success of their idols, but this does not (and should not) excuse problematic fan behaviour that threatens the safety of these idols. These uninhibited breaches of privacy will still need to be handled firmly, hopefully in the form of stricter precautionary measures and legal regulations, so as to avoid compromising the idols’ rights to their own personal spaces.

CYBER-VIGILANTISM

Another issue that arises from the K-pop fan culture is cyber-vigilantism, which is a form of collective vigilantism, usually undertaken as a way of delivering social justice through the Web in response to social issues. These "acts of cyber-vigilantism are conducted by self-appointed individuals or groups online who employ illegal or questionable tactics to achieve a given end" (Wigmore, 2018). One of such prominent incidents of cyber-vigilantism occurred during the Oktaekyeon saengri hyeolseo, or "Taekyeon Menstrual Blood Love Letter" incident (Jung, 2012). The gist of this incident is that a fan of 2PM's Taekyeon posted a letter of her adulation for the idol with her blood (which was later revealed to be menstrual blood). Fans of 2PM were quick to swarm to the Web and tear her down by "locating her home page on the social networking site Cyworld, which they subsequently published, inviting others to add vicious comments as well" (Jung, 2012). The fan offered a hasty apology for her actions but the damage had already been done. Many such blood-related expressions of adulation emerged in the following months, and every time they occurred, netizens would hunt down and publish these individuals' personal information online. With the aid of "simple clues such as email IDs, these netizen detectives worked together to expose perceived wrongdoers to publicly punish them on the Web in a practice known as sinsang teolgi (personal information theft)" (Jung, 2012). This act of unearthing and publishing personal information publicly with the intention of malice is also otherwise known more popularly as doxxing (Boulud et al, 2021).

The act of doxxing may initially seem to be acceptable because it acts as a warning for those who overstep their boundaries, but it poses a severe ethical issue of dissemination of private information without consent. It is without doubt that the sasaengs have crossed their limits, but that does not warrant their right to privacy being violated in retaliation. Moreover, because this private information is published publicly with the intent to cause harm to the individual being targeted, such acts "potentially threaten [these individuals'] safety", and can even lead to them "changing their addresses or phone numbers" so as to protect themselves (Boulud et al, 2021).

FAN WARS

A third issue with the fan culture in K-Pop is the presence of fan wars, which have "existed for as long as K-Pop has been around" (Healy, 2020). Since K-pop is heavily fan based, fans actively push for their idols' achievements and constantly aim for them to get the recognition and accolades they deserve. Since fans are aware of how significantly they contribute to the success of their favourites, a sense of competitiveness emerges that eventually results in rivalry between fandoms. Friendly competition is one thing, and is even encouraged because it can "create motivation and help people reach goals" (Novak, 2012). Healthy competition inspires the attainment of goals and idols will naturally feel more motivated to work towards their goals knowing that their fans are pushing for them as well. However, when this "competition turns vicious or mean", then the fan culture becomes toxic and this affects both the fans and the idols in negative ways (Novak, 2012). Typically, this shift from friendly competition to vicious rivalry occurs when extremely passionate fans take the rivalry very personally and pin the fandom name to their own identities, causing them to fight ferociously for their group and discriminate against every other fandom that poses a threat to their group. The rivalry between SECHSKIES and H.O.T. fans, for instance, was one of such intense rivalries and their fans even met face-to-face since using the Internet to engage in such fan wars was not common back then. In fact, "the rivalry between the fans of these two groups was so fierce that police intervention even had to be made" (Lin, 2018). This tension was so legendary that "TV show 'Reply 1997' actually produced a scene that showed quite accurately what went down" between the two fandoms (Lin, 2018). In more recent times, the fan wars between ARMYs (BTS fans) and Exo-Ls (Exo's fans) have gained more popularity, though fortunately, this rivalry is starting to become less intense than it used to be.

As much as the individual fandom's efforts aid in the successes of their idol groups, there are no tenable benefits to engaging in fan wars; in reality, these wars only cause trouble for the fans as well as the idols. Sometimes, it is almost ironic that the fame these fans draw towards their idols becomes the infamous kind because these feuding fandoms attract unwanted attention to themselves and end up tarnishing their own reputation in the process. Ultimately, because idols and fans share such a close, almost familial bond with each other, one party's actions will inadvertently impact the other. Therefore, when fans engage in these fanwars and bring their own fandom's reputation down, they will also inevitably affect the reputation of the idols that their fandom represents as well.

CRITICISM

A Final issue that plagues the K-Pop fan culture is the criticism that fans target at the idols themselves. Like their fans, idols are only human and are therefore susceptible to making mistakes. However, because their lives are thrust under the spotlight, these mistakes gain more prominence than they normally would and it is almost impossible to cover them up, naturally resulting in them becoming more prone to criticism. These criticisms usually stem either from a critical analysis of the idol's skills and/or (usually) a 'scandalous' incident that they could have been involved in. Sometimes, these criticisms are useful in the form of constructive feedback that can improve the idol's skills and/or remind them of the implications of problematic behaviour, but most of the time, these misgivings are not received and managed in such a positive manner. "Idols quickly can go from being supported and revered through active communication with fans, but an unfounded rumor or mixed reactions to personal comments could quickly result in terrible mental anguish" (Cho, 2019). Fans react to these mistakes by leaving negative and sometimes unwarranted comments on the idols' social media and may even threaten to boycott their events. Some idols who are constantly the subject of such criticisms include Blackpink's Jennie, Mamamoo's Hwasa, (G)-Idle's Soyeon and BTS' Jimin and J-hope, among many others.

The problem with directing such harsh criticisms towards these idols is that it can affect their mental health severely. Sometimes this hate is so extreme that the idols in question fall into severe depression and develop mental health disorders that lead to disarray in their personal lives. Some even end up taking their own lives because of that, like f(x)'s Choi Jin-Ri, otherwise known by her stage name Sulli. She received immense hate for being a brazenly vocal individual who made "unconventional choices" in her life, and coupled with the pressure of being a female K-pop idol, she committed suicide on 14 October 2019 (Borrowiec, 2019). Unfortunately, even her suicide could not prevent some anti-fans from hating on her, and apparently, some of them hated her so much that they even celebrated the news of her death (hannahleex, 2019). The issue of mental health problems is a persistent one in the entertainment industry; idols are easily accessible to the general populace via social media, and coupled with the pressure of maintaining a positive media presence, the criticisms that they are subjected to as a result of this need to maintain this positive image is hugely damaging to the artists and can worsen [their] mental health disorders (Rodgers, 2020). It is no secret that the South Korean society can be "unfairly harsh on such public figures", and the detriments of such expectations are further exacerbated by "the lack of support networks and legal recourse" (Borowiec, 2019).



CONCLUDING REMARKS

In short, the fan culture in K-pop has been largely uplifting and wholesome, with both companies and fans themselves playing integral roles in its development. Most fans understand their impact on the K-pop scene and work towards rallying positive support for K-pop and its derivative social causes. K-pop fan culture is one that is unique to Korea and its music scene, and is showcased in a myriad of ways. With the unity and bond that characterises this relationship of mutual support between artistes and fans, the latter especially hold an unprecedented amount of power and the ability to make significant changes. Therefore, fan culture, as dynamic as it is, should be studied closely and its might channelled into the right avenues. Ultimately, K-pop fans are a force to be reckoned with, and it is without doubt that their unwavering support is what makes (and will continue to make) K-pop a global phenomenon.

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HOW MUKBANG STARTED AND WHERE IT STANDS TODAY



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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the world has seen the emergence of an exponential trend: Mukbang. The term ‘Mukbang’ is a fusion of the korean words ‘meoknun’ (eating), and ‘bangsong’ (broadcast), essentially making ‘Mukbang’ a show in which the performer is a person consuming food in front of a camera for an audience. This paper will explore the underlying social, psychological and economic factors that have transformed the mundane activity of consumption into a sensationalised trend and its globalisation in recent years. Additionally, it also considers the insidious sides of the trend, covering controversies such as the promotion of unhealthy eating habits and animal cruelty accusations, in order to present a comprehensive examination of modern society through the globalisation of Mukbang.

HOW MUKBANG STARTED & WHERE IT STANDS TODAY

Contrary to popular belief, Mukbang is not a recent phenomenon, and its origins were vastly different from the widespread binge-fest that it has now become on YouTube. Mukbang began in South Korea in 2008. In its fetal stages, Mukbang was a basic streaming on South Korean streaming sites like AfreecaTV, where streamers like Banzz, the Diva, and Wangju started out by filming themselves gorging down insane amounts of food for a live audience. Over time, it gained mass appeal and became a nuanced internet genre with multiple subcategories and dedicated followings. Oral fixation is central to Mukbangs, where audiences, transfixed, watch streamers eat large amounts of food ravenously, taking care to capture the entire experience of eating — in all its sounds and visuals — on camera. Thus, one of the crucial points of Mukbangs is its potential for autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR), where one receives immense pleasure from listening to everyday habits like whispering, clothes folding, writing, et cetera. The everyday activity of eating has the possibility of giving such satisfaction to viewers as the chewing of food in the mouth is an activity of noise. From the physicality of eating, the genre has further divided into subcategories such as ASMR. Mukbangers like Zach Choi focus solely on the sounds of consumption without speaking, detracting from the original format of a conversational-style stream, allowing viewers to focus on the “tingles” (Jackson, 2018) of the “slurping, chewing, [and] crunching” .

THE POPULARITY OF MUKBANG: THE EXAMINATION OF SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

The widespread allure of Mukbangs can be seen as a reaction of the individual to socioeconomic structures in South Korea. The amalgamation of factors such as South Korea's technology and internet, the strong social value attached to eating, the empowerment Mukbangs facilitate and the income Mukbangs provide will be analysed in explanation of the trend.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY & FAST SPEED INTERNET

The success of Mukbang can be attributed to the pervasiveness of advanced technology and fast speed internet in South Korea (Hakimey & Yazdanifard, 2015). In fact, the country is recognised for having one of the fastest internet networks worldwide. In 2018, internet penetration among South Korea's population hit 95.9%. It was also reported that South Korea had 46.35 million internet users in 2019, which is around 91.8% of the population (Waldeck, 2020). On top of that, the country's mobile internet speed is '3.4 times faster than the world average of 35.96 Mbps' and is considered one of the fastest in the world (Pulse, 2020). Thanks to this hyper-fast internet speed, mutual interaction is possible between Mukbangers and their audiences during Mukbang live streams (Hakimey & Yazdanifard, 2015). The most popular Mukbangers are those that cultivate a community with their viewers — viewers not only interact with the streamer, but other viewers as well in the chatroom of the stream. Such live interaction fulfils the need for companionship virtually, yet keeps a safe distance that protects the individual as connection can be withdrawn at any time based on one's desire. Consequently, this creates a sense of social bonding and belongingness, which helps to establish an emotional connection between Mukbangers and their audiences (Kircaburun et al., 2020).

COMPANIONSHIP

Traditionally, eating is perceived as a communal activity in South Korean society. It is seen as a social activity where mealtimes are a vehicle for communication between individuals. This is demonstrated in the eating customs of Korean society. Individuals go beyond simply gathering at a table together for a meal as they even eat from the same bowls, sharing food as a part of the eating activity (Kiraburun et al., 2020) . This is manifested in the "banchan culture" where Koreans often eat in a group, sharing a number of side dishes among them in addition to their bowl of rice, or main meal. "Banchan culture" has carried on to contemporary society, and eating continues to be perceived as a communal activity. Simon Stawski, founder of YouTube channel "Eat Your Kimchi" (Jackson, 2018), observes that it is not common for people in South Korea to eat out by themselves as dining is a social activity in which most will stay indoors if they have no eating companion. However, even as isolated eating becomes more commonplace, the tradition of "banchan culture" continues as there is still the existing desire to perform the socialising function mealtimes trigger, which is what Mukbang streamers replicate. People retain a sense of belonging when watching Mukbangs as they reproduce the experience of an eating companion, making viewers feel emotionally connected.

This need for emotional connection through eating and the demonstration of it in Mukbangs is a modern development due to the economic progress of South Korea, and the structure of its economy on which social mobility depends on. Due to the centralisation of the economy around South Korea's capital, many move alone to Seoul from smaller cities or the countryside to find work and study, resulting in an increasing percentage of single-person households suffering from loneliness. Additionally, the national rhetoric of education as a tool for success and social mobility has exacerbated the number of people living alone. Due to the emphasis on academic excellence — in which Seoul is the best place for hagwons (cram schools) and big companies — the demographic of people living alone ranges from students living in goshiwons (cheap one room flats), to parents working to send money back to support their families in smaller cities (Park, 2015). According to a young South Korean Mukbanger (Stanton, 2015), the popularity of the Mukbang phenomenon was that many South Koreans live alone and attach strong social value to eating. Thus, the elevated social isolation as a result of the economic structuring of South Korea has led to the increased popularity of Mukbangs as more watch it as a means to have eating partners and feel emotionally connected.

MUKBANG AS EMPOWERMENT

From the perspective of Mukbangers, there is an element of power play that comes with glorified binge-eating. Conventionally, when one binge eats, there is a sense of powerlessness and an absence of control. Yet, by choosing to do Mukbangs (Fisher, 2020), that loss of power is rediscovered and taken back by the individual because Mukbangs elevate the socially disapproved activity of over-eating. For the streamer, because they are openly gorging themselves and ignoring the culture of restriction around food, they are dissipating the shame that comes with eating excessively and freely. This disallows space for shame from others because they expose themselves first.

For the modern female Mukbanger, this empowerment is more significant. Mukbangs have a history of fetishization, where slim, attractive women are often surrounded by overweight male fans and viewers. According to Donnar (2017), Mukbangs have a sexual aspect as it facilitates a sexualised gaze to attractive Mukbangers while they are in a private and vulnerable state of eating. She concluded that viewers reacted with an array of feelings — pleasure, desire, longing, envy, horror, disgust and shame — to the eating and sexual sensations provided by Mukbang videos. The female Mukbanger is transgressive in her public display of eating messily, being noisy, demonstrating pleasure, and eating too much as she detracts from the conventional demure womanly image (Gillespie, 2019). In line with the film theory of the male gaze (Mulvey, 1989), female Mukbangers are often sexualised and objectified by their male audience. However, by voluntarily taking the role of the objectified female and thereby triggering the sensations of shame, longing, and desire in their audience, the female Mukbanger reverts the male gaze as she takes control of its direction, turning from passive to active subject. The established gendered power dynamic — where females are subjected to and males are the subject — is therefore reverted through the streaming, giving the female agency to determine how the male gaze is used for her benefit.

MUKBANGS AS A SOURCE OF INCOME

The popularity of Mukbangs has legitimised it as a plausible job industry to many, as its low barriers to entry and potential for high earnings attract many aspiring Mukbang stars. Unlike other entertainment professions (actor, singer, influencer), Mukbang stars do not need to conform to a certain look or behaviour, with famous Korean Mukbangers amounting to a variety of shapes, sizes and faces that are not conventionally perceived as attractive. Hence, this makes it extremely possible for normal people to become famous by simply doing something everyone enjoys — eating delicious food. Moreover, the globalised status to which Mukbangs have attained in contemporary society has also made the job an extremely profitable one.

South Korean Mukbangers earn an average of $10,000 per month with the big stars earning a lot more (Vardaraj, 2020). Kim (2018) asserts that Mukbang is a 'part of digital capitalism' (p. 234). Since Mukbanger's incomes are mainly generated through fan gifts of digital currency, advertisements and sponsorships, many Mukbang clips normally include these items (Bruno & Chung, 2017). Advertisement profits make up a huge portion of a Mukbanger's income. For instance, Lee, a young Mukbanger who creates Mukbang videos on AfreecaTV, 'earns around 30% of his total income from advertising' (Bruno & Chung, 2017). Mukbangers can also receive income from sponsorships by 'broadcasting their show in restaurants' upon the request of restaurant owners (Bruno & Chung, 2017, p. 159). Occasionally, huge portions of branded food, like Nando's and Domino's Pizza, are featured in Mukbang clips as well (Hawthorne, 2019). A possible reason for this is that the cost of employing Mukbangers for marketing is relatively lower as compared to celebrity marketing (Babenskaite & Yang, 2019). At the same time, these companies would be able to easily reach out to the masses as popular Mukbang clips often garner millions of views (Hawthorne, 2019). Besides that, many Mukbangers may prefer to consume large quantities of food during their broadcasts. This is because Mukbangers 'can broadcast as long as they eat the food', which strategically allows them to reap greater profits (Bruno & Chung, 2017, p. 159). As a result, the ease of entering the industry has seen the emergence of many Mukbangers aspiring to hit celebrity status like those of Banzz, Keemi Kim and Hyunee.

THE APPEAL OF MUKBANG: A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

The experience of watching and filming Mukbangs will be deconstructed in exploration of the cross-cultural factors that inform the allure of Mukbangs and its addictive potential.

VICARIOUS CONSUMPTION

Due to South Korea's strong emphasis on visual appearances and behaviour (Holliday & Elving-Hwang, 2012) , there is a strong 'diet culture' that has manifested into a culture of restriction around food, both socially and individually. Consequently, the experience of watching Mukbangs has a cathartic effect on the viewer as they eat vicariously through the Mukbanger. According to counsellor Amanda Greenlees, Mukbangs are so satisfying to Koreans dieting because " you get to watch someone else do something you're not allowed to do...to see someone completely ignore the boundaries and do whatever they want is probably part of the appeal" (Fisher, 2020) . The Compensatory Use Internet Model (CUIM) explains the psychological characteristics of engaging in online activity — individuals use the internet in order to compensate unattained offline needs via specific online activities such as self preservation, belongingness, social gratification, and so on (Kardefeit-Winther, 2014). Therefore, the viewing of Mukbangs online provides a semblance of emotional connection, and the satisfaction of consuming food. Similarly, Gillespie (2019) concurs with these findings and suggests that viewers watch Mukbang to 'experience the sensation of binge eating' or to suppress their craving to binge (p. 54). For these viewers, Mukbang videos satisfy their desire to eat without them actually consuming any food. The logic behind this is that watching Mukbangers eat enables viewers to vicariously participate in the act of eating while simultaneously preventing them from having to face the reality of gaining weight. Moreover, in their examination of the vicarious aspect of Mukbangs, T u and Fishbach (2017) found that watching others consume certain foods affected viewers' subsequent reaction to the same foods. The first experiment showed that viewers who watched someone eat pizza had less desire for it after, and the second indicated that viewers postponed the consumption of M&Ms after watching a video. Thus, this proves that individuals could experience vicarious satiation when they observe others' consumption as their own.

WATCHING MUKBANGS AS A FORM OF ESCAPISM

To some, watching Mukbang videos serve as an escape from reality (Kircaburun et al., 2020). Be it in school or at work, stress plagues a majority of South Koreans (Hakimey & Yazdanifard, 2015). Since stress is commonly regarded as the key cause of suicide (Hakimey & Yazdanifard, 2015), it is not surprising to observe that South Korea has one of the highest suicide rate among OECD countries. In 2017, the country's suicide rate reached 23 deaths per 100,000 persons (OECD, 2021). However, if South Koreans have outlets to relieve their stress, suicide rates in the country could change for the better. One method that a number of South Koreans choose to adopt to alleviate their stress is through watching someone eat (Hakimey & Yazdanifard, 2015). By watching Mukbang videos, viewers have the opportunity to take a break from their fast-paced and hypercompetitive lifestyles. At the same time, their stress could also be relieved through the vicarious pleasure they experience while watching Mukbangers eat (Hakimey & Yazdanifard, 2015).

THE VOYEURISTIC PLEASURE FROM WATCHING MUKBANGS

South Korea is a society of spectacle and coupled with the element of technology in Mukbangs, this enables the fast spread of the Mukbang trend. The transference of food from plate to body is a highly sensuous and carnal act, whereby technology facilitates the 'mass' aspect of it by allowing the extremely personal activity to be viewed by many at once. As mentioned before, one is in a private and vulnerable state when eating, and the visual and aural sensations generated when one eats speaks t o the voyeuristic desire humans naturally have. The ASMR quality of a Mukbang, combined with the viewing of one preoccupied with eating, makes for an addictive viewing experience. The pleasure derived from watching Mukbangs can be closely compared to watching porn, as the immersive viewership experience stimulates similar feelings of pleasure that satisfies hunger and sexual desire. Although they are different needs, gastronomic and sexual appetite are often related to one another (Fisher, 2011), explaining the pleasure Mukbangs trigger which contributed to the growth of it as a global trend.

HOW MUKBANG SPREAD WORLDWIDE

Although Mukbang has been popular in South Korea for the last decade, it only started to gain global traction when American YouTubers began to partake in this food phenomenon. Mukbang made its way to the US in 2015, after US entertainment duo “The Fine Brothers” uploaded a YouTube video of Westerners reacting to Mukbang eating contests which gained millions of views (Gibbs, 2015). As a result, the term ‘Mukbang’ skyrocketed on Google searches with people seeking to learn more about Mukbang.

Initially, there were mixed reactions. Some people found the large amount of food eaten fascinating, while others were bewildered that people would tune in just to watch someone eat. Nonetheless, many Western YouTubers soon followed suit and posted their own versions of Mukbang online. In recent years, food mania has even developed into a new video genre that dominates YouTube.



DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KOREAN AND WESTERN (US) MUKBANG

While the trend originated in South Korea, there are significant differences between South Korean and American Mukbangs. The biggest difference is the way in which Mukbangs are broadcasted. Korean Mukbangs are often broadcasted live, while US Mukbangs are mostly pre-recorded and uploaded to YouTube (Givens, 2020). In South Korea, most Mukbangs are live streamed on platforms such as AfreecaTV, Twitch or even YouTube itself. After the live stream, recordings are then uploaded on YouTube for viewers and fans to re-watch. Conversely, given that American Mukbangs are pre-recorded, they tend to lack the interactive experience that live streams offer. Some might even argue that the feeling of connection, intimacy and belonging is lost in US Mukbangs (Fazmin, 2020).

Another difference between South Korean and Western Mukbangs is the way in which Mukbangers earn money. This is affected by how the Mukbangs are broadcasted. In South Korea, Mukbang videos are mostly funded by audience donations. The people hosting the Mukbangs are known as Broadcast Jockeys (BJs), a Korean term for people who deliver live streams to viewers. Korean BJs make most of their money while live streaming through receiving 'star balloons', the digital currency used on AfreecaTV that are gifted to streamers by viewers (Choi, 2019). The cyber money can be withdrawn in the form of real cash after a commission cut. Such 'star balloons' allow BJs to earn huge sums of money. One example is Yu Hye-ji, who is well known for her Mukbang live streams on AfreecaTV. Just four months into her show, she received 120 million won (S$137,000) from a fan in a single live stream episode.

Unlike their Korean counterparts, US Mukbang BJs earn their income solely through ad revenue and sponsorships on YouTube instead of via audience donations. This can be seen from the example of Mukbang YouTuber Bethany Gaskin, also known as "BLove" on Youtube. With 2.94 million subscribers, she claimed that YouTube made her a millionaire through ad money and sponsorships. Since her estimated net worth is $2.5 million (Celebs Life Reel, 2020), it allowed her to confidently quit her job to pursue a career as a Mukbang vlogger on YouTube.

An additional difference between Korean and US Mukbangs is the way it is hosted. In South Korea, Mukbangs are live streamed during typical dinner hours so viewers can eat alongside their favourite personalities. Korean Mukbang BJs are mostly silent so that they do not draw attention away from the food. On the other hand, the Western approach to Mukbang is very much of a "Let's get to know me" session (Fazmin, 2020). Even though they do not receive any real-time response from their viewers because their videos are pre-recorded, they still tend to be conversational in their videos. This conversational aspect gives viewers a deeper connection with the host beyond the food (Givens, 2020).

Such differences could be attributed to the contrasting cultures of South Korea and the US. The US is considered to be more open-minded and more willing to share about themselves (Baer, 2017). Hence, US Mukbangs are very much conversational as explained earlier. In comparison, South Koreans are known to be more conservative and shy (Shin, 2018). It is therefore unsurprising that Korean Mukbangs tend to provide a companionship that is relatively more 'silent'.



Video streamer Yu Hye-ji is shocked after she receives a massive amount of donation from one of her fans during a live broadcast on Monday. (Screen capture of Yu's livestream video)

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE MUKBANG INDUSTRY

The link between the Covid-19 pandemic and an increased demand for more Mukbang is not coincidental (Koman, 2020). ErikTheElectric, whose 1.8 million subscribers know him for both Mukbang and food challenge videos, noticed the sharp increase in interest from his fans since the outbreak of the virus. He attributed it to the fact that people are spending most of their time indoors, and in some countries, people cannot even go outside. Thus, they seek interaction and satisfaction by watching YouTubers eat. This is evident from the sudden rise in popularity of Mukbang videos during the pandemic. With reduced real-life interaction, people seek Mukbang videos for companionship during a meal and to reduce their loneliness (Yoon, 2020).

Moreover, Mukbang is also being viewed for entertainment purposes, and as a form of escape from reality during this pandemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, public health actions such as social distancing are necessary measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19, but they can also make us feel isolated and lonely as well as increase stress and anxiety. Considering the fact that Mukbang videos help to relieve stress and provide pleasure and happiness to viewers (Pettit, 2019), it is not surprising that some turn to watching Mukbang to combat the adverse effects of reduced socialisation during this distressing period.

Furthermore, Mukbang also satisfies one's craving when 'outside' food is no longer as accessible as it was before the pandemic. In an attempt to curb the spread of Covid-19, many governments around the world temporarily prohibited dining-in at restaurants when their countries had to deal with alarming numbers of Covid-19 cases. This caused many restaurants worldwide to shut down as they were unable to grapple with the decline in business due to the pandemic. Besides that, this also meant that customers had to go down to the restaurant for self-collection, or opt for delivery services. However, many were hesitant to leave their homes during the pandemic. Also, some were unwilling to opt for delivery services due to the higher delivery fees charged during the pandemic. Outside food was therefore no longer as accessible as it was before the pandemic, making Mukbang an excellent alternative to help satisfy one's cravings as one could vicariously consume the food while watching Mukbangs. This notion is further supported from a psychological standpoint. A psychologist at Widener University explained that 'food is a nice mild drug and when you're stressed out, self-control is impaired. You become motivated to seek food out, especially when you're stressed and don't have immediate access to it.' As extended time alone and reduced time out in quarantine has increased the propensity for stress, people therefore turn to Mukbang to fill this 'void' during the pandemic, thereby boosting the industry.

CONTROVERSIES

THE PROMOTION OF UNHEALTHY EATING HABITS

DISHONESTY AND FOOLING FANS

ANIMAL ABUSE ACCUSATIONS

Despite the joy Mukbangs bring to many, there are downsides to it. Over the years, many Mukbang related controversies have emerged with some even gaining international attention. They include Mukbangers fooling their fans, hiding sponsorship deals, animal cruelty or even health related controversies. When filming Mukbang videos, Mukbangers frequently consume large portions of food ranging from burgers, instant noodles or fried chicken, to seafood or anything else that pleases their audiences. Over time, these foods take a toll on their bodies as they are not only consumed in huge quantities, but also consist mainly of saturated fats. Each Mukbanger's food intake can go up to thousands of calories, which is double or triple that of a regular person's recommended daily intake. Since Mukbangers are paid to gorge on food, some even go to the extent of stuffing themselves with more food even when they are already full. Consequently, they end up regurgitating their food when they are off screen. If one's body is not well managed and properly taken care of, such extreme eating could lead to gastrointestinal distress, physical discomfort, and fatigue. In the long term, some may experience weight gain or suffer from heart diseases and diabetes (Unger, 2020). Furthermore, such diseases might be incurable and Mukbangers could plausibly have to deal with the consequences of their unhealthy eating habits for the rest of their lives. Nevertheless, many are willing to make these sacrifices at the expense of their own bodies because of the attention and money it attracts.

THE PROMOTION OF UNHEALTHY EATING HABITS

Since young, many people have been taught the importance of eating healthily and maintaining a balanced diet. However, Mukbang counteracts this as it encourages excessive eating. Although such extreme eating habits are unhealthy, a growing number of people are starting to ride on the Mukbang wave. This could indirectly lead to the promotion of unhealthy eating habits among Mukbang audiences (Shipman, 2019). The average Mukbang viewer might be inspired to imitate such habits as the food is made appetizing on screen. Moreover, these videos only showcase the pleasant aspects of Mukbangs to audiences, that is, the joy of eating freely. As a result, viewers may be unaware of the health risks that come along with it. Therefore, being a Mukbanger is not as glorious and easy as it is made out to be. Apart from that, it is also a job that is difficult to sustain for a long period of time.

Additionally, due to the nature of their job, Mukbangers do not have regular eating hours. For example, if they were to plan to film a session at night, they might deliberately starve themselves by not eating anything earlier in the day so that they can consume as much as they can in front of the camera (Lanigan, 2019). In other circumstances, some Mukbangers refrain from eating or drinking anything outside of filming. This becomes a bad habit for them as they may find themselves unknowingly skipping meals with their loved ones and becoming estranged from friends and family members. Thus, extreme devotion to the Mukbang job could threaten Mukbangers' relationships with people they care about if they become increasingly obsessed with eating just for the sake of online attention.

DISHONESTY AND FOOLING FANS

Another controversy that surrounds Mukbang would be Mukbangers' dishonesty towards viewers. Korean Mukbanger Eat With Boki is a YouTube personality and content creator who rose to fame domestically and internationally by publishing Mukbang content on her own channel. Presently, she has over 5 million subscribers on her YouTube channel. She uploads at least one video almost everyday and is popular for her clean and pretty way of eating. However, in 2020, she was accused of pretending to eat her food, as well as accepting secret sponsorship deals on her channel. This was discovered when eagle-eyed fans caught her editing out several parts of herself swallowing the food, which implies that she spat out her food after chewing them for show. Upon analysing her video further, the fans found even more evidence of her refraining from swallowing her food— she would chew and hide the food at the corners of her mouth before proceeding to do a fake swallow. Afterwards, she would subtly hold up a finger sign as an indication for a stopping point to make a transition cut to the next shot (Turner, 2020). This practice is not common in Korean Mukbang videos, as live performance eating is the norm. Thus, the discovery of this enraged Mukbang supporters as they felt deceived. This controversy blew up within a few days, and many of her viewers turned into 'detectives', commenting on her videos with timestamps to expose the parts she had edited out.

What exacerbated her controversy was the discovery that she had been accepting deals for sponsored videos, using the food that she eats as product placements. She would subtly introduce food products and enjoy them deliciously on screen, without telling her viewers that these were paid promotions. By doing so, viewers believed that these foods were purchased with her own money and specially selected by her because she truly liked it. Such actions not only deceived her viewers, but also made them lose their trust in her and question her motive behind these videos. With the rise of social media in recent years, the influence of Youtubers and Influencers has expanded to supersede that of television artists. Since Mukbangers' reviews tend to be perceived as more genuine in comparison to official advertisements shown on televisions, fake Mukbangs spark widespread outrage among viewers. Following these recent revelations of numerous advertising controversies, Youtube has made it compulsory for Youtubers to declare their paid product placements. Eat With Boki has since posted an apology for not informing her viewers about these paid advertisements. However, she continues to deny her fake swallowing allegations. Instead, she took a two-month break from Youtube and worked on another style of video, in which she posted a raw and uncut version of her full Mukbang meal. In spite of the controversies, her popularity remains unwavering and she continues to attract even more subscribers.

ANIMAL ABUSE ACCUSATIONS

Ssoyoung is another popular Mukbang Youtuber from South Korea that has been embroiled in controversies as well. With more than 5 million subscribers currently, she rose to fame thanks to her unique content— consuming raw seafood and exotic animals on screen. Although many Mukbangers eat large amounts of seafood as well, what distinguishes Ssoyoung's content from others is the special component where she introduces live seafood on screen, before consuming them immediately. Her unconventional methods of preparing these seafood have incited many disputes, as the visual drama it provides is ethically questionable. A few instances of her performances would be: coating live seafood with salt and sauce before placing it on a barbeque grill, and having an octopus' tentacles climb all over her face while she slowly consumes it. Furthermore, while preparing the seafood on screen, she would agitate them, screaming and jumping to incite a visceral reaction from the animals as they become defensive and fight back with her (Belcher, 2020).

Even though Ssoyoung's videos has gained millions of views for her bizarre eating methods, she has also received much backlash and accusations of animal cruelty. Ssoyoung shows no sympathy when she handles these sea animals roughly, even showing close-ups of them, suggesting that she devalues their life. Hence, people denounce her for giving these animals a painful death while enjoying them on camera, freshly killed. Whenever she uploads a new video, people flood her comments section with condemnations of her cruel and unethical treatment towards these animals, with some accusing her of producing such videos for monetary gain. These people assert that her vidoes detract from what a Mukbang video should be — which is the enjoyment of food, and not the torture of animals through consumption.







However, there has been a huge debate on whether this is animal cruelty, as fishmongers in markets kill live seafoods too. While some people argue that this is outright animal torture, some have come out to defend Ssoyoung, saying that eating live seafood, such as octopus, is part of Korea's culture (Belcher, 2020). In South Korea, eating live octopuses, or San-nakji, is considered a delicacy. Seafood restaurants chop up live octopuses and consumers enjoy them dipped in sesame oil and toasted sesame seeds. Even so, multiple petitions were created in objection of her actions, with viewers calling on Youtube to remove Ssoyoung's channel, claiming that 'it is absolutely unacceptable to not only fail to kill an animal humanely before cooking it but to also perform acts of mutilation that effectively amounts to torture' (Hall, 2020). However, Youtube has claimed that Ssoyoung's content does not violate its policies. A Youtube spokesperson told the outlet: 'Our trust and safety team is located around the globe and we draw upon this regional expertise when drafting our policies. We have strict policies regarding animal abuse, and have determined the videos highlighted do not violate them' (Plant Based News, 2020). Therefore, Youtube did not remove her video. Nonetheless, due to the huge backlash, Ssoyoung's representative released a statement explaining that 'Ssoyoung channel's primary goal and intention is to introduce various kinds of food and to deliver joy to our beloved viewers across the world. Given that Ssoyoung is a Korean YouTuber, we put our basis on Korean food culture' (Harris, 2020). They also added that 'With that baseline, we occasionally feature dishes that non-Korean viewers may find exotic, with a hope to provide new experience and joy' (Harris, 2020). Therefore, this suggests that Ssoyoung may not have had the intention to purposely abuse or torture live animals. Perhaps, the backlash that Ssoyoung received came from a western audience who criticized Ssoyoung based on their western ethics because they were unfamiliar with Korean culture.

Nevertheless, after this controversy blew up, Ssoyoung altered the way she filmed her videos. She removed the handling of live seafood and edited away parts of her old videos that could be uncomfortable for viewers. She also added a disclaimer at the beginning of her videos to warn viewers beforehand about possibly disturbing scenes. Apart from that, she also started cooking seafood that had been washed and cleaned beforehand in her videos. However, her viewers' reactions to this were divided — Some were disappointed, claiming that she had lost her original essence while others were grateful that she had taken her critiques seriously and improved on her content. Till today, there is still fervent debate on whether Ssoyoung's actions were too excessive, or if it was merely just a way of sharing South Korea's food diversity. Nonetheless, live animals should be handled carefully, correctly, and treated sympathetically.

WHAT GOES ON BEHIND THE SCENES

While the rise in popularity of Mukbang inevitably results in an increasing number of controversies, we should not overlook the hard work that Mukbangers invest behind the camera. In order to keep fit, some Mukbangers reveal that whenever they are not filming, they spend their time exercising. In fact, some of them exercise more than what a regular human does on a daily basis. This explains why there are Mukbangers who do not gain weight even though they frequently consume thousands of calories. For instance, American Mukbanger Zach Choi says that he manages to stay healthy by working out 'religiously' for up to two hours a day and also by consuming lots of fruits and vegetables (Harris, 2020). Additionally, Korean Mukbanger Banzz exercises for 12 hours a day to keep his six-packs in shape (Chow, Wong, Lo & Leung, 2019). By exercising more than usual, this could help Mukbangers to neutralise the damages that binge-eating on camera could cause on their health.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL FUTURE OF MUKBANG?

Mukbang has proved to be boundless, as its potential for adaptation into different cultures creates its mass appeal. As elaborated, Mukbang has expanded beyond its domestic borders, transforming from a national phenomenon to a global one. Its substitutability for companionship and entertainment speaks to its attractiveness, but we must also be aware of its equally detrimental effects on society. Issues such as animal cruelty, promotion of unhealthy eating habits, the encouragement of ideal body types, and inauthentic filming are a few of the larger controversies that tell followers of Mukbangs that they should be aware of the subvert messages communicated in these broadcasts and the unknown behind-the-scenes so as to prevent a potentially adverse effect on the unsuspecting viewer.

With the onset of COVID-19, the conditions that gave birth to the Korean Mukbang craze have been replicated similarly in the global context. With many unable to socialise, there has been increasing loneliness felt by those living alone under quarantine restrictions. Mukbang videos have the potential to counteract loneliness and isolation by sharing and connecting in a virtual community. As such, globally we have seen a rise in viewership of Mukbangs (American and Chinese) online. This suggests that Mukbangs have the potential of bridging people across borders, in which it can potentially be a driving factor in making the world more globalised.



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